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# VIDEO

\$2.95 • AUGUST 1994

magazine

## Hype, Hope & Reality

**Video On The  
Info Highway**

## FALL'S HOT PRODUCTS

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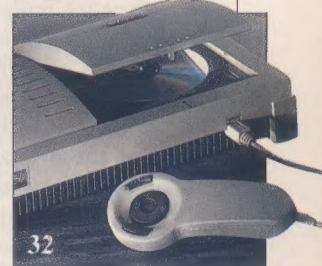
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# VIDEO *magazine*

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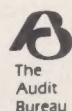
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The video superhighway—sports and movies on demand, interactive games, online services and more—all coming, but not necessarily soon, to your local TV. Remote control photo by Gene Coleman; baseball photo, Dave Black/Sports Photo Masters

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CHANNEL ONE



## Information Highway—promises and reality

Whether it's called the information superhighway or the National Information Infrastructure, the notion of an electronically connected society has captured the imagination and interest of industry, the media and (uh-oh) the politicians. Many videophiles view the trendiness of the debate with a combination of hope, amusement and wariness. Each of these reactions is justified. Nevertheless, for those of us with an abiding interest in home video, the future is brighter than ever as a result of developments that can be included under the broad rubric of the info highway.

In our cover story, "Hype, Hope and Reality," contributing editor Frank Beacham provides a reality check on the state of video in the info highway, along with a look at some of the short-term successes and the challenges still to be met if the promise is to be realized.

While we're amused by the whining of some cable companies about regulation, and the way telephone companies brand cable operators as monopolists—and wary of the Feds' penchant for mucking things up (as in the 1984 Cable Act)—we view the coming of the Infobahn with hope. Digital video transmission will make available electronically many of the pleasures videophiles already enjoy. Now we use a variety of products—including VCRs, laserdisc players, camcorders and editing equipment—in concert with our TVs to assure high-quality picture and sound. In years to come, if proponents of the new systems deliver on their promises, high-quality images and sound will be wired directly to your home or delivered via high-powered satellites.

But don't confuse PR with reality. The truth is—with the exception of the direct broadcast satellite—a fully realized digital information and entertainment system is still years away. The good news is that virtually all the neat stuff touted as coming down the road is here already in the traditional components we're all familiar with. So don't wait for the info highway to be paved and smoothed to your door. There are scores of products that provide the same benefits now. Videophiles know it better than anyone.

In our June issue, we printed a reaction from the Lucasfilm Home THX Group to our two-part article about THX ("THX on Trial" and "The Decoder Debate," April and May) as well as our response. Subsequently, representatives of Lucasfilm and our editorial staff met to conduct further listening tests in an attempt to resolve the differences in performance obtained in our separate tests of the Kenwood KC-X1 surround sound decoder. The results of those tests appear in this month's "Home Theater" column. As always, *Video Magazine's* testing objective is to provide the best possible equipment evaluations to our readers, and we're happy to work with companies that share that goal.

James M. Barry  
Editor

# VIDEO

magazine

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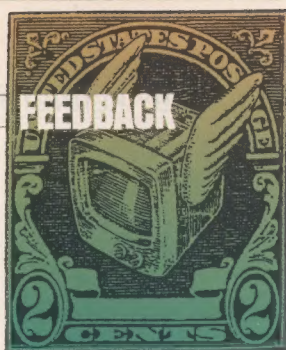
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## Parasailing, Pro-Logic and Paik

### High-wired act

"Awesome Camcorder Adventures" (May '94) really hit the spot. I just returned from Florida where I tried parasailing for the first time. I took my camcorder up when I flew and, being almost 70, it was quite an experience. I mounted a wireless receiver to the camcorder and wore a communications headset. My friend in the towboat below had a headset while my wife on the beach had a hand-held transceiver. The video and three-way audio turned out reasonably well with only a few mistakes. With a little more experience, I'll really be sailing.

Wally Kervian,  
South Hadley, Massachusetts

### Pro Pro-Logic

Your article on THX versus music speakers was very interesting. The key element in any speaker system is accuracy, whether for music or home theater applications. I listen to music and home theater on the same system, music in stereo mode and movies in Dolby Pro-Logic surround mode. My Pro-Logic set-up is as good as or better than any THX system.

Steve T. Seitz,  
Portland, Oregon

### Locked out

I was considering buying one of RCA's new DSS small-dish satellite systems when it becomes available this fall. However, I've heard that RCA intends to equip it with anti-recording devices that work much like Macrovision on pay-per-view sports and movie events. Why should I spend \$700 to \$900 for a DSS receiver and buy "unrecordable" HBO when I can buy recordable HBO (despite the picture quality) from my local cable company? Someone should tell RCA greedy schemes like this will kill the business.

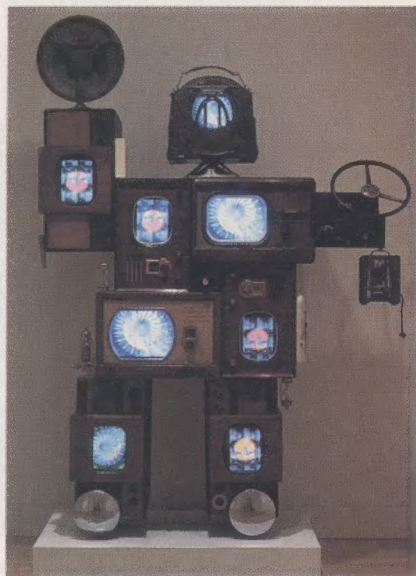
Phil Cohen,  
Bay Harbor, Florida

Editor's Note: Though the DSS system will include a chip by Macrovision, spokesmen for RCA and DirecTv said it will not be used for subscription services

like HBO-type programs or standard pay-per-view events.

### We have the technology...

An item by Stan Pinkwas about video artist Nam June Paik ("Fast Forward" May '94) caught my attention. Paik was commissioned to make a sculpture for the Cincinnati Art Museum to commemorate the career of radio pioneer Powell Crosley Jr. Crosley was a unique man who developed any product he



Paik's Metrobot: Homage to Crosley.

thought he could sell to the public. Paik's "Metrobot" includes TVs, radios, hub caps and other items from the Crosley Corp., including my contribution of a book-radio. Frank M. Shea, Cincinnati, Ohio

### For the record

● In July's "Late Breaking News," a phone number directing readers to further information about moviemaking seminars by Videonics and TDK should have read 800-338-EDIT.

● A comment in May's "VHS Camcorder Buying Guide" about the weight of early camcorders should have been attributed to Hitachi video product manager Rich Savich, not Bob Scaglione of Sharp Electronics.



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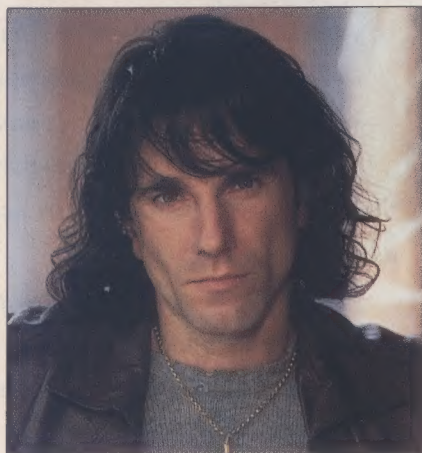
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## Acting out

►► The Method. It's the technique supposedly used by so many great actors—from Marlon Brando to Robert De Niro and now, Daniel Day-Lewis—to get deep inside the roles they play, often staying in character when the cameras stop rolling. But many actors wind up renouncing the method publicly, if only to distance themselves from the self-indulgence now associated with it.

Add irishman Day-Lewis, brilliant star of the recently-released *In the Name of the Father* (MCA/Universal), to the list of honored thespians who don't wish to be known as "method actors." "Things are sometimes said about me that give the impression I'm a life-long member of the masochist society," Day-Lewis told us. "People never mention the pleasurable areas of discovery you go through. It's all part of the messy process by which you hope to understand a life that's essentially alien to your own."

But some observers—journalists especially—refuse to understand, at least according to Day-Lewis. "There was a piece recently in an Irish paper entitled, 'Why Don't You Try Acting.' It was about me, and it suggested that all my preparation undermines spontaneity. It said, 'Look at Keitel, Pacino, De Niro—they walked away from the method years ago.' But do you really think De Niro just strolled onto the set of *Raging Bull* and said, 'Oh, what's happening today, lads?' Everyone prepares." —KK



Method to His Madness: Actor Daniel Day-Lewis.

## High-end hoedown

►► Once an insular community obsessed with exotic tube amplifiers and electrostatic speakers, the world of high-end audio is opening its doors to home theater. At the recent Miami show sponsored by *Stereophile*, the leading high-end audio magazine, home theater stole much of the thunder from music-oriented demonstrations.

Among the most impressive home theater sound demos were those from Cello, showing a quintet of its new, affordable (\$5,000/pair!) speakers; Mirage, which debuted a new surround-sound processor designed for use with its bipolar speakers; and Atlantic Technology, demoing a dynamite new \$1,400 speaker system.

There was plenty of video, too. One display combined Faroudja's \$14,000 line doubler with a Barco projector to create a very watchable 17-foot diagonal image. Runco's Super IDTV 900 (with integral line doubler) was also impressive in a display with Snell's new \$29,000 THX system. But some manufacturers are keeping one foot firmly in the stereo realm. Witness B&W, which introduced a stunning pair of music speakers dubbed the Nautilus. The speaker's strange shape gives each driver its own optimized enclosure. The Nautilus indeed sounded like a \$36,000/pair speaker ought to: fabulous.

The *Stereophile* show provides a rare chance for the public to see and hear home theater products, and talk to their creators. Next year's show will run from April 28 to 30 in Los Angeles.

—Brent Butterworth



B&W's Nautilus

## How Americans watch

►► Sometimes it seems that the more TV changes, the more it stays the same. A new survey of 4,000 families, *Technology in the American Household* by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, has concluded that the TV set is still "the most flexible technological device in modern homes" despite the

growth of personal computing. The study also found that:

- Americans spend more time watching TV than engaging in any other leisure activity.
- More Americans, 67 vs. 27 percent, would rather rent a movie than visit a movie theater.
- Cable subscribers are more satisfied with their viewing choices than broadcast viewers, while satellite dish owners

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Video CD as it is formatted today has no future. The picture is not good enough

—JAMES MEYER,  
Senior Vice President,  
Thomson Consumer  
Electronics

are happier than cable subscribers.

- A third of all VCR owners still don't know how to program their VCRs.

- Only a third of all viewers actually watch commercials.

—SP

## Reality bites back

▶▶ "I was aware that she had been directed by Martin Scorsese and Francis Coppola," says *Reality Bites* director Ben Stiller of his experience directing Winona Ryder, "but I had to get past that. Every actor needs a director. I had to be there for her in that way no matter how insecure I was feeling."

Stiller has performed on *Saturday Night Live*, MTV and on his own short-lived FOX TV series, but directing *Reality Bites*, his first feature film, was a real learning experience. "I thought directing was all technical. You know, 'Action. Cut. Put the camera here.' It's more just dealing with people, their egos. Trying to get them to see what you want and getting them to want it too."

Stiller, who also appears in *Reality Bites* as an executive at a thinly veiled MTV-type network, adds that he drew from personal experience for his character. "He's a lot like many people I've met in the business—development executives, agents and so on—who are very close to the creative process but not a part of it," Stiller explains. "They want to feel a part of it so they can justify their existence." —Jon Silberg

## Comedy isn't easy

▶▶ Michael Agee, owner of the Nostalgia Archive and mastermind of the new *Lost Films of Laurel & Hardy* laser-disc (Image Entertainment), has had his share of troubles with the team's old movies. When he was working at Hal Roach Studios in 1986, King World Productions cancelled a \$10 million agree-



Lost and Found: Laurel and Hardy are back on disc.

ment with Roach to syndicate the Laurel and Hardy film library, maintaining that it was so decomposed as to be unusable.

Agee responded by personally sifting through one and half million feet of decaying nitrate film stock and three months later produced pristine master videotapes and a successful TV show. The 26-episode series earned over \$5 million during its 1986-89 run.

There was a serious side effect, however: Agee contracted silver nitrate poisoning from the decomposing film and was sick for three months. He shrugs it off with a typical tough guy remark: "Hey, somebody had to do it. Laurel & Hardy were geniuses—I just love their films, and it's disgusting the way they've been kept."

—Tom Soter

## THE NUMBER

800,000,000

Macrovision-encoded cassettes  
in circulation worldwide

## TIMESHIFT TEN YEARS AGO IN VIDEO MAGAZINE

"CBS/Fox has agreed to pay George Lucas \$10 million for the video rights to *The Empire Strikes Back*. The bidding war for the film was reportedly hot and heavy. It's nice to see that the worlds of Hollywood and home video are not always fighting...Extrapolating Sony's idea of the "Video 45" tape, Pioneer has come up with the eight-inch laser-disc—emphasizing music videos, naturally. The company's new ad spokesman is Ray Charles, who insists that since the sound is so good, he couldn't care less what the video looks like...Average home videotapers are using one in every three blank tapes to record soap operas, according to an A.C. Nielsen survey. Time-shifting old movies, usually broadcast during the workday or late at night, ran a stiff second...Sony's pioneering of Beta Hi-Fi early last year came as a breath of fresh air and considerably boosted the format's lagging sales. We only wish that the VHS folks would get their act together and aggressively push Hi-Fi the way Sony did. Hurrying matters along for both Beta and VHS

Hi-Fi will be the FCC's approval of stereo TV broadcasting. Broadcasters are rushing to equip themselves to start stereo transmissions. Thus VCR manufacturers have a greater incentive to make and sell Hi-Fi machines for off-air stereo recording...Recent trade reports showing Beta slipping below 20 percent vis-a-vis VHS—and predicted to go still lower—have drawn fire from Sony executives. Meanwhile, Zenith's jump from Beta to VHS indicates a steady worldwide strengthening of VHS."



AUGUST '84

## Interactive mecca

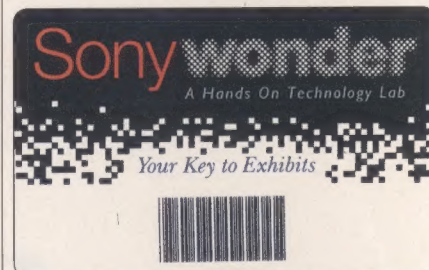
►► It starts with a card. You pull one from a bin and swipe it through a barcode reader while staring at a small monitor. In a moment, you're watching your own digitized image, listening to your recorded voice and being told how to proceed through the Sony Wonder Technology Lab.

The Lab is a dazzling new interactive museum perched above an airy Sony retail plaza in the former Manhattan headquarters building of AT&T, which Sony has converted to its own uses. Visitors employ the personalized cards to ac-

tivate hands-on exhibits that demonstrate the history of video, audio and other electronic technologies.

A winding, four-story ramp lures you through a series of studios where you can mix a 16-track audio recording, edit a Billy Joel music video, operate an endoscopic body camera, and produce, direct or shoot one of four mock TV shows always in progress. If there's still time, you can pause to operate a planetary surface robot, help design a new videogame, predict the course of a hurricane, or commune with TV science guru Beakman in the country's first high-definition, interactive theater.

At the end of a visit, you can keep



**Ticket to Ride:** The Sony Wonder access card.

your card in case you return, which I know I will. The Wonder Lab is open Tuesdays through Sundays and is free of charge. For further info, call 212-833-8100. —Stan Pinkwas

## Late Breaking News

**JURASSIC** Park update #3: Steven Spielberg's monster hit will be available letterboxed and full-frame when it arrives on videocassette October 4. Both versions carry a list price of \$24.98, but you can expect grocery and discount stores to blow 'em out for half that figure, just to get customers in the door. As we reported before, both the laserdisc editions, available October 12, will be letterboxed. Unfortunately, neither the \$44.98 CLV edition nor the \$74.98 CAV will have any extras beyond the movie. You can expect to see a special edition of *Jurassic Park*, probably on tape as well as laserdisc, some time in '95, though Universal executives stopped just short of confirming this rumor.

Just as we went to press, MCA/Universal announced that Spielberg's other 1993 theatrical blockbuster, Best-Picture winner *Schindler's List*, will beat *Jurassic Park* to video when it arrives in stores August 17. Standard letterboxed and full-frame cassette editions will be priced for rental, and a letterboxed CLV laser edition will cost \$49.98. Limited-edition cassette and laser "Collector's Sets," which add a soundtrack CD, the paperback book on which the movie was based, and a picture booklet, will be available at the same time for a whopping \$139.98.

THE 40-MINUTE S-VHS-C tape Panasonic and JVC have hinted at for years has finally arrived. JVC says its new ST-C40XZ cassette uses a combination of high magnetic-particle packing density, a sturdy ceramic filler backcoating and a new Super Poly-

stone base film to achieve enhanced durability, despite an overall thickness of only 12.3 microns. The ST-C40 will be a godsend to S-VHS-C camcorder owners, who routinely run out of tape at just the wrong time (the previous maximum recording time at SP speed was 30 minutes). And at the EP speed, the new tape runs for two hours, making S-VHS-C a viable format for watching home-taped movies on the go.

ESCHEWING THE HOOPLA OF the typical spring line showing, Pioneer quietly announced its 1994 line in May. The company's TV offering remains the same, but the laserdisc players and A/V receivers have undergone significant revamps.

The star of the laserdisc line is the CLD-D703, which offers auto side-changing, digital CLV effects, separately adjustable luma and chroma noise reduction and a coaxial digital output (a feature audiophiles have been begging for). Pioneer expects that the CLD-D503, a player with side-changing but no digital effects, will sell on the street for less than \$500. Both these models use Pioneer's new gamma-turn mechanism to reduce side-changing time to eight seconds. The company will add a new player to its Elite line, the CLD-53, with the gamma-turn mechanism and the same Legato Link digital-to-analog conversion used in the audio section of our favorite laserdisc player, the CLD-97.

Pioneer also announced the first karaoke laserdisc player we've seen that also plays CD+G karaoke discs. A new \$99 microphone mixer, the MA-3, turns any laserdisc player into a karaoke machine. The MA-3 even comes with a mic and an eight-inch karaoke demo disc.

All of the company's top A/V receivers have been restyled along the lines of last year's VSX-D2S. All feature

100 watts in each front channel, and another 100 watts split between the surrounds. The VSX-D903S brings the onscreen menu system used in the \$2,000 VSX-D2S to a more affordable price: \$1,200. The D903S also offers onscreen control of Pioneer's PD-F100 100-disc and PD-F51 50+1-disc CD changers. The least expensive ProLogic receiver, the VSX-403, is only \$345, but it offers 45 watts in each front channel.

SHARP IS PLUGGING ITS popular LCD ViewCams directly into the video superhighway. The company has introduced two models in Japan that work with special modems that transmit compressed still images over phone lines. The video pictures can be sent in simple or detailed modes that require up to 20 seconds to transmit. Sharp hasn't decided whether to release the products here.

PANASONIC'S VHS-C VIDEO-cassettes come in two new flavors, tropical punch and family values. The 30-minute cassettes both use the same Super High Grade formulation. But the "World Travel" blanks display a romantic palm-strewn sunset, while the "Family" tapes picture a smiling baby. With Panasonic considering more "themed packages," can Fabio blanks be far behind?

THE INDUSTRY-WATCHING *Television Digest* reports spotting a pair of unique PC-TVs in stores in Japan. Matsushita has packaged a 486SX computer with a hard drive, a CD-ROM drive and a 13-inch TV. Users can watch TV through an application window and download TV graphics to other programs. A multimedia model by IBM lets viewers either watch TV or compute. Both cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

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# Beach gear, TVs big and little, and an ad zapper



## ◀ SOLID SOUND

The Titan Powered Subwoofer from ACI (\$640) is a wooden tower of sound. With 250 watts of power, it features a flat frequency response to 20 Hertz, cross frequency from 50-150 Hz and user-adjustable volume. ACI claims that the Titan's 12-inch woofer has higher output and better bass than most 15-inch subwoofers. Velocity-sensing feedback protects it from damage and reduces distortion. (For additional information, circle 100 on the Reader Service Card)

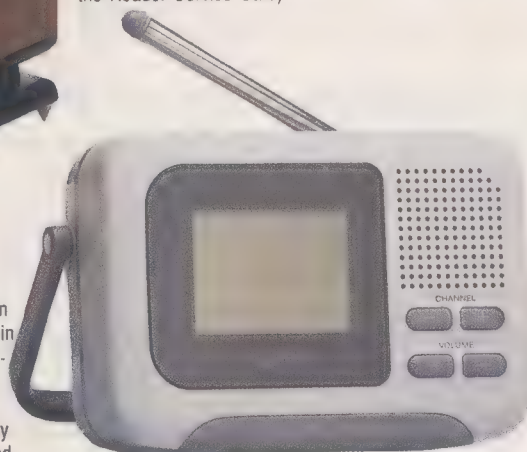


## ▲ BEACHCAM

Hitachi's new VMH71A Hi8 camcorder (\$1,899) not only incorporates a color viewfinder and electronic image stabilization—it can float! It is submersible in water up to one foot for one minute—O-rings keep the outside out. Hitachi says it will withstand 400 pounds of pressure. The VMH71A also features a 24x lens, instant zoom, auto head cleaning, 16:9 recording and synchro editing. (For additional information, circle 103 on the Reader Service Card)

## NEWS SPLASH ▶

Sony FDL-KB300 Watchman TV (\$549) lets you enjoy your favorite programs by the pool. This television features a 3-inch color LCD screen in a splash-resistant, double-sealed design. The unit has a built-in rechargeable nickel-cadmium battery with a unique charging system. Sony avoids the danger of a water-induced short-circuit by eliminating exposed terminals. It also features a leakage sensor, VHF/UHF tuning, a built-in antenna and onscreen displays. (For additional information, circle 106 on the Reader Service Card)



## ▼ GIVE ME A BREAK

Arista's Commercial Break may be a godsend. If you've dreamed of eliminating commercials from your videotaped TV programs, Arista offers a compact, simple-to-use answer. The Break senses commercial clusters and skips over them, leaving a 5-10 second blue screen in their place. It sets up easily, connects with the TV, VCR and wall outlet, and identifies by itself the VCR's control code. The price is \$199. (For additional information, circle 109 on the Reader Service Card)



## TRIM ON YOUR TABLE ▼

The Mitsubishi TS-5053 (\$3,099) is part of the Slim Line Table Top group of projection TVs, which feature improved contrast and brightness. Viewers with space limitations can have the advantages of projection television without the size. This model is less than 24 inches deep and weighs a mere 143 pounds. It also includes picture-in-picture and Active A/V Network, which facilitates combined TV/VCR operations. (For additional information, circle 105 on the Reader Service Card)





#### STABLE SHOOTING ▲

Nikon's new VN-350 Hi8 camcorder (\$1,099) offers shooting convenience and advanced features such as electronic image stabilization. It also includes four programmed auto exposure modes, from portrait right up to a high-speed shutter mode. A 12x power zoom, a fader with mosaic option and an audible trigger alarm complete the package. (For additional information, circle 110 on the Reader Service Card)

#### YAMAHA TOWERS ▶

Yamaha's NS-A2835 speaker (\$499/pair) is a magnetically shielded, floorstanding tower designed to provide the front left and right channels in a high-quality audio/video system. It incorporates twin 8-inch woofers, a 4-inch midrange driver and a one-inch ferro-fluid cooled dome tweeter. (For additional information, circle 102 on the Reader Service Card)

#### STICK-ON SOLUTION ▼

Brother's P-Touch PC (\$499) is a dedicated label printer compatible with both IBM-PC and Macintosh. Does your tape collection need organizing? Users can print almost any image from their computer screens onto laminated, adhesive transfer labels available in over 40 varieties. (For additional information, circle 108 on the Reader Service Card)



#### (NO) GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE ▲

The Magnavox FP5360 Video Theatre Projection TV (\$2,899) is the first TV designed to be compatible with Philips' ghost-cancelling technology. It also includes built-in surround sound and automatic volume leveling. A remote control locator will even pinpoint your mislaid unit. The ghost-cancelling unit (arriving early '95 as an accessory under \$200) eliminates multiple images and plugs into a dedicated jack. (For additional information, circle 104 on the Reader Service Card)

#### ULTRA-HITACHI ▼

Hitachi's new top-of-the-line Ultravision II 60SX9K (\$3,999) is a 60-inch projection television incorporating HDTV lens technology. Hitachi claims it combines a high level of color purity and resolution with user-friendly features. Need time to jot down home shopping numbers? A "Quick" feature puts a snapshot of the main picture into the PIP screen. Dolby-Pro Logic completes the package. (For additional information, circle 107 on the Reader Service Card)



## The final verdict on the THX decoder debate

Contributing editor Corey Greenberg's May '94 article, "The Decoder Debate," caused perhaps the greatest controversy of any article in the history of *Video Magazine*. In the article, Greenberg severely criticized the THX-certified Kenwood KC-X1 surround decoder. Since receiving Greenberg's manuscript, we've conducted a series of listening tests to verify his impressions, and to answer concerns Lucasfilm (licensor of THX-certified products) raised about our testing methods. The results of these tests gave us new insight into audio equipment testing, and the conclusions about THX that can be drawn from our experience with the KC-X1.

Before we published "The Decoder Debate," we conducted two formal tests. First, three *Video Magazine* editors participated in a single-blind comparison between a KC-X1 and a Fosgate Model Two, using B&W non-THX speakers, Marantz MA-500 THX amps and a Pioneer CLD-97 laserdisc player. The Model Two (an older, outdated design) edged the KC-X1 by a fair—but not dramatic—margin. In the second formal test—a series of double-blind comparisons between a second KC-X1 and a Fosgate Model Four, using alternately THX and non-THX speakers—all six of the participating staffers found the Model Four much smoother-sounding than the KC-X1, though the results were less pronounced on THX speakers.

Lucasfilm then conducted its own listening tests on our first KC-X1, and found it virtually indistinguishable from two other, well-regarded THX decoders. To reconcile the results obtained by *Video Magazine* and Lucasfilm, director of THX licensing Tony Grimani flew to our offices for more tests.

Grimani, technical editor Lancelot Braithwaite and I hooked up the first sample of the KC-X1 (which had since been shipped back to Kenwood, then returned to our offices), along with the Fosgate Model Four and a Lexicon CP-3, using Grimani's three-way decod-

er switching box. Right away, we had a problem—the KC-X1 wouldn't power up. But as I pulled it from the rack, the power suddenly came on.

In these double-blind tests, we used a Pioneer CLD-S201 laserdisc player (to alleviate Grimani's concern about the CLD-97's slightly high 2.4-volt output) and the Marantz THX amps. We started with B&W THX speakers, then switched to B&W non-THX speakers—two 803s as the left and right, and an 805 as the center. We used the A-weighted calibration Grimani recommended, but to everyone's surprise, setting our sound-pressure level meter to

there were three possible causes of the new, incongruous results in the test with Grimani. First, we used a different laserdisc player, one with a proper, two-volt output. Second, we fed the Model Four from the CP-3's tape loop. Third, the initial power-up problem showed that *something* had happened to the KC-X1 between the time it left Lucasfilm and arrived in our offices which, unlikely as it might seem, might have improved the sound. At this point, Grimani had to leave, but Braithwaite and I resolved to try more tests to figure out what had happened.

Unfortunately, we couldn't resolve the question of whether or not the KC-X1 used in the test with Grimani sounded different from the other sample. Once again, the first sample refused to power up, but this time for good.

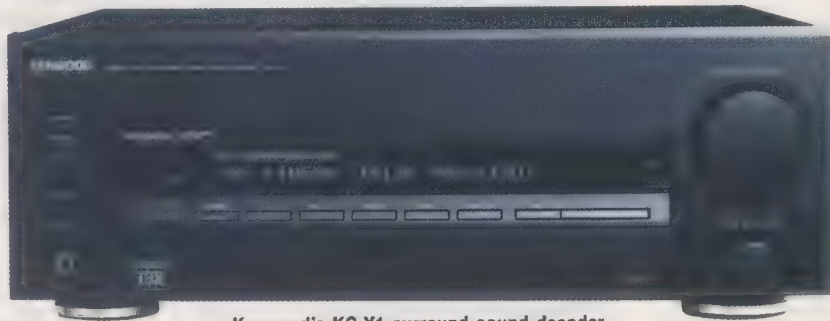
We started again with a new system—a Parasound HCA-1206 THX

amp, a Panasonic LX-600 laserdisc player (which puts out a two-volt signal) and RA Labs' non-THX speakers. A double-blind comparison between the Model Four and the second KC-X1 sample mirrored the results of our original test: The Model Four sounded much better.

To try to find out why the test results were so different, I connected one stereo output of the CLD-97 directly to the Model Four, and sent the other output through the CP-3's tape loop. At last, I had the answer—the CP-3's tape loop wasn't as transparent as we had thought. The Model Four sounded great without it, weak with it.

This result taught me something that anyone concerned with sound quality should remember: Sloppy signal routing can erase the differences between electronic components. So *never* assume something—even the simple buffer stage used in a tape loop—doesn't make a difference. Compare the sound with and without any piece of equipment (including cable) you add to your system. Trust your ears, not your assumptions.

*continued on page 31*



Kenwood's KC-X1 surround sound decoder

C-weighting produced almost identical results in our room.

Interestingly, Grimani remarked that differences between the decoders were easier to hear in our room with non-THX speakers than in Lucasfilm's room with THX speakers. He stated that the non-THX speakers exaggerate the differences between components; my opinion is that THX speakers partially conceal the differences. Who should you listen to? Neither of us—listen to the speakers for yourself.

The results of this test were far from those of our original tests. Braithwaite and I both bashed the Model Four for a harsh, almost crackly sound on voices. He preferred the CP-3 on each of the three types of program material used, while I actually preferred the KC-X1 on two of the three tests. All three of us were baffled—we agreed that each decoder had a distinct sound, and it seemed unlikely that Braithwaite's and my own perceptions would have changed so much.

On the surface, the methods for all the tests were virtually identical. But

## X-Rays, erase heads & rooftop antennas

**Q** When the TV show *America's Funniest Home Videos* shows its mailing address, it's on an envelope that's marked "Videotape—Please Don't X-Ray". Is this a precaution I should take when mailing videotapes to friends and relatives? I thought that only photographic film is susceptible to damage from X-Rays, not videotape.

Jane Devore  
Atlanta, Georgia

**A** Strictly speaking, you're correct. X-Rays can damage photographic film, since the rays can pass through just about any substance and fog light-sensitive film—assuming the X-Ray device is set high enough to present this sort of danger. Travellers with film cameras bypass this risk by either packing their film in lead-lined bags, or by having their gadget bags inspected visually, avoiding the X-Ray machine completely.

Videotape is a magnetic, not photographic, process and isn't subject to the same sort of risk. Some observers have noted there may be a risk of inadvertent erasure from the magnetic fields of the motors that drive the conveyors belts on the X-Ray machines, but I think this is overstated.

**Q** Most camcorders and VCRs I've seen have a flying erase head. But Mitsubishi VCRs claim to have twin flying erase heads. Why the difference, and what benefit does it offer? Bob Baird  
Chicago, Illinois

**A** Flying erase heads are used to ensure clean edit points and scene-to-scene transitions. Instead of erasing old video with a fixed electromagnet located in the tape path, a flying erase head moves diagonally over the surface of the tape, following the same helical path as the rotating video heads.

Since one frame of video consists of two video fields, comprised of two adjacent diagonal tracks, a single flying erase head must be at least as wide as the widest recording head, preferably wider. On many VHS VCRs, for example, the width of the flying erase head is about 120 microns, or about twice the width of the widest SP video track.

These dimensions are sufficient to deliver clean edits in most cases, but are

optimized for the fastest tape speed. When recordings are made at the slower speed, the flying erase head is wider than it needs to be. That's why some Mitsubishi VCRs use two flying erase heads—one optimized for SP use, and one for EP use. Customizing the width of the heads for each speed delivers more precise edits, free of moire or the "rainbow" distortions occasionally visible with VCRs using single flying erase head.

**Q** While I live in Los Angeles and have cable TV, I also have a sizeable roof antenna, a leftover from the previous owner of my house. I can switch between the roof antenna and the cable, using an A/B switch. Sometimes I can pick up TV stations in San Diego very clearly, other times not at all. Why this intermittent reception, and is there any way to stabilize it? Norm Alexander  
Pasadena, California

**A** VHF transmission and reception varies according to weather conditions. Cloud cover in your area will generally allow TV signals to bounce further than they will under cloudless conditions, creating the intermittent reception you describe.

Check the antenna you inherited to see if it has a rotor, or rotating motor. If not, the antenna is probably pointed toward the usual transmission point for all TV stations in your area. In the Los Angeles area, almost all VHF stations transmit from Mount Wilson, east of the city. Installing a rotor will allow you to remotely redirect the antenna southward, towards San Diego, and greatly improve the reception quality for TV stations from that city, even though you live about 90 miles away.

Other readers who rely almost entirely on cable TV for reception might also consider installing an outside antenna. It's not prohibitively expensive, and it provides free TV signals, often with superior quality to those from the cable. An inexpensive A/B switch (which you can buy for a few dollars at Radio Shack and other electronics stores or which your cable company will install for you at a reasonable cost, if you ask them) gives you the ability to switch back and forth between your two signal sources. ▶

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## Q&A

**Q** I have four VCRs, two from Hitachi and two from RCA. All have Express Recording, or XPR, which lets you program the VCR to record one event within a 24-hour period without having to turn on the TV. Since you don't have to turn on the TV set to use onscreen menus, I find this feature very useful, but my local dealers say it's no longer available. Do any current models offer XPR?

James P. Connor  
Devon, Pennsylvania

**A** Your dealers are wrong. Almost all new VCRs offer XPR. Instant Record, IRT, Express Record, One-Touch Record or Instant Timer Record. All these names refer to essentially the same feature, which may be why your dealers are failing to recognize it.

As you note, as long as the VCR is set to the channel you want to record and the recording speed is selected, you just have to punch in the length of the recording, usually in 30-minute increments. On many machines, you can also delay the start of the recording by a selectable amount of time. While this feature may appear to be new, it harkens back to the early days of home video before the advent of onscreen programming, when all programming was done by pushing little buttons or levers while watching an LCD display.

**Q** I have two four-head VCRs, a hi-fi model and a mono machine. They're the same brand. When I record a tape on the mono machine and play it on the stereo VCR, the audio sounds muffled. But when I record and play a tape on the mono VCR, the audio sounds much better. What can I do to obtain clear sound on the stereo VCR when playing tapes made on the mono VCR?

Paul Moore  
Lubbock, Texas

**A** The quick answer is to replace the mono VCR with another stereo model. Monaural VCRs continue to have a place in the VCR market, but barely. Just as simple two-head VCRs are growing less popular and being replaced by superior four-head designs, hi-fi VCRs are coming down in price and pushing mono machines to the back burner.

In fact, a two-head VCR is almost always mono, and typically sells for around \$200 these days. But mono sound, based on a narrow one-millimeter wide track on the top edge of the tape, relies on linear audio recording techniques, and the fidelity is quite poor compared to VHS hi-fi, which records almost CD quality analog audio using special rotating heads mounted on the same spinning drum as the video heads. In the 10 years since JVC unveiled VHS hi-fi, the quality has improved significantly. But little has been done to improve linear audio, which remains a low-fi backup track on hi-fi machines. In many tests we've conducted, we've also found that this linear audio track is often out of phase with the hi-fi tracks, creating even more problems.

In your case, apart from the phase problem, there's a good chance the azimuth alignment of the audio head (a fixed head set on the right side of the head drum) may be slightly out of kilter. A technician may be able to adjust it to improve the audio slightly, but I think the money would be better invested in upgrading to another hi-fi deck. Linear audio is adequate for voice and narration, but can't compare with hi-fi sound when it comes to music.

Tape interchange problems that are inherent in all VCR designs can also contribute to tracking problems with hi-fi tapes as well. But these days, this is a minor consideration, compared to the vast improvement in audio that VHS hi-fi delivers.

**Q** I'm taping railroad videos with a Hi8 camcorder, and I want to make copies I can sell. I need to arrange the original sequences onto a second-generation master, and then dub three copies at a time from that. How do I get the best possible second-generation master? My first impulse is to edit to S-VHS, but would SuperBeta be better? Also, I was told to make a second-generation Hi8 master using a Sony EV-S3000 VCR because the tape wraps all the way around the head and records more information. What do you think?

Richard Moss  
Long Prairie, Minnesota

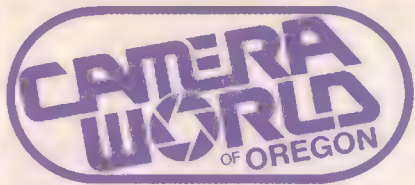
**A** Hi8 is Hi8. Tape wraps differ from product to product and the EV-S3000 does offer a larger tape wrap, but that's to give it the ability to record digital audio in the space provided by the extra wrap angle. It has nothing to do with overall image resolution. Setting this aside, dubbing from your Hi8 camcorder to the 3000 would still produce an excellent second-generation master, and VHS copies made from it would be about as good as you can get using consumer equipment.

Creating your edited master on an S-VHS deck would provide equally good results. All in all, I think S-VHS remains a better choice for editing projects like this. If you do create a decent edited master, regardless of format, why not just take it to a professional tape house for duplication? These costs have also come down, and a pro shop can "bump up" your Hi8 or S-VHS master to a broadcast level format, and make copies from that. You'll get much better quality than from your home-grown duplication set up.

**Q** The jackets of almost all the laserdiscs in my collection carry the warning "When not in use, place laserdisc in jacket and store vertically in cool, dry place." This makes sense to me. But other jackets implore users to "Remove shrink wrap completely upon opening." Is this really necessary?

Jack D. Watson  
Clearwater, Florida

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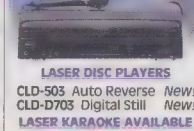
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## Tips on picking the right tripod

For all the talk about subtle differences in technical parameters like horizontal resolution and signal-to-noise ratios, the most obvious difference between professional video and home efforts has nothing to do with formats and specifications—it's in shot framing. And the starting point for any serious discussion about framing is the ability to keep the picture steady, usually with a tripod.

Fortunately, tripods are the most

exception is for shooting the occasional point-of-view shot, such as in horror films, where you want viewers to experience each footstep.

If you just want to capture one static shot at a time, almost any tripod can hold the camcorder adequately still. But if you want to do camera moves like pans and tilts, you'll find there's a big difference between inexpensive tripods and fancier models. In fact, the heaviest,

The best tripods use fluid heads. In a fluid head, a viscous liquid is permanently sealed inside to provide smooth resistance to both up/down (tilting) and left/right (panning) motions. The advantage of a fluid head is simple: smooth camcorder motion. But the disparity between the smoothness of cheap and expensive fluid heads is enormous.

Beware of fluid-head hype—when camcorders became popular a few years ago, a lot of cheap tripods hit the market claiming to have fluid heads, but with performance not much better than spring-loaded heads. Visit a professional video or film supply store to see how smooth the heads on over-\$500 tripods are, so you can learn how to gauge the smoothness of less-expensive models.

All fluid-head tripods are rated for the maximum weight they can handle. If you exceed this limit, the tripod won't necessarily break, but the head's performance will be compromised. In other words, your pans and tilts will look jerky.

All good tripods have lock-down knobs or levers to limit the camcorder's motions, so that when doing a pan the camera won't accidentally tilt, or vice-versa. Better heads also have drag or resistance adjustments to control how hard you must push to make the camcorder move.

Although zooming the lens is the one camcorder movement that doesn't really require a high-quality head, you'll still need a solid, stable tripod if you intend to touch the camcorder controls. Otherwise, every time you press the zoom buttons the camera will shake. (A wireless remote control with zoom buttons can be very useful in this situation.) A shaky tripod will also shake the image whenever you start and pause the tape, unless you use a remote.

The fanciest camcorder movements require physically moving the camcorder forward or backward (dollying), or side-

*continued on page 70*



**Top Tripods:** Bogen's tripods and heads are highly regarded among video pros. Above, the 3063 head, and at left, the 3033, 3036 and 3046 tripods.

universally compatible camcorder accessories. Regardless of whether your camcorder is a deluxe semi-pro dreamboat or a point-and-shoot loss-leader, it's guaranteed to have a tripod socket (screw threads) on its bottom.

Sure, you've seen TV news crews shooting without tripods, but most TV news camerapersons have years of experience keeping a shoulder-mounted camcorder as stable as possible. And even with all that skill, the picture still looks shaky. Just watch a local newscast—the shaky field images are literally “anchored” by far more stable shots of the news anchors in the studio (where hand-held camerawork is taboo).

But not all the field shots are shaky—TV news crews try to use tripods whenever time and space permit. Outside of news (where production values tend to be sloppier), tripods are considered an absolute must. The only

sturdiest pneumatic pedestal mounts used in network TV studios (which smoothly glide up and down at the touch of a button) cost tens of thousands of dollars. Even the simple-looking wooden-legged tripods (like the Sachtler 7+7) commonly used in 16mm student film productions cost thousands of dollars. Tripods used by TV news crews carry similar price tags.

What makes a pro tripod so expensive? Once you go beyond the extremely sturdy base, the main difference is in the head. The tripod's head is mounted on top of the three legs—it's what you use to attach the camcorder. The cheapest heads, found on most tripods costing less than \$100, are simply a collection of nuts and bolts that facilitate camcorder mounting. A half-notch up in quality are spring-loaded heads, which use a metal spring to provide resistance when you tilt the camcorder up or down.

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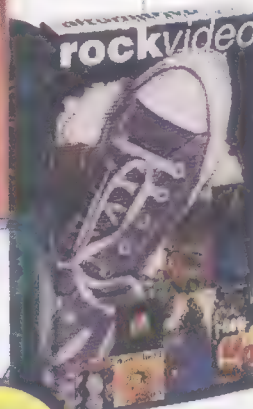
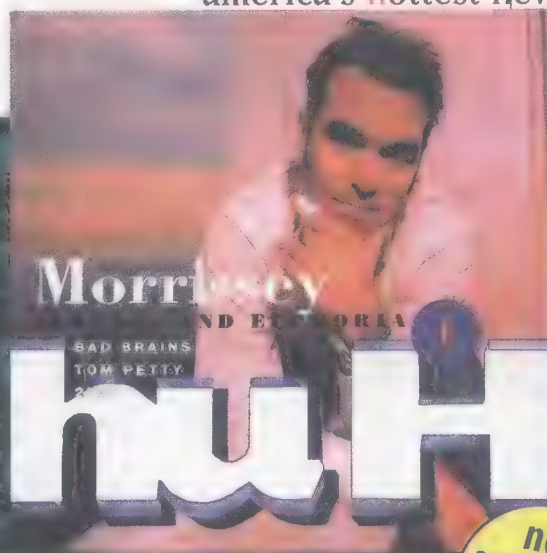
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## Searching for Billy Joel, the Bionic Woman and UFOs

I'm looking for a new or used laserdisc of *Billy Joel Live from Long Island* (1983). I'll gladly reimburse for expenses incurred. Used disc must be in excellent condition.

John Shiles  
43 Timber Trail  
Port Orange FL 32127

I am looking for episodes of *The Bionic Woman*, which aired between 1976 and 1979. I've had no luck in getting MCA to release any episodes on home video. HELP! VHS please.

Jon Brown  
1807 North Weaver Street  
Gainesville TX 76240

My S-VHS machine crunched the tape that had four episodes of Cinemax's *Red Shoe Diary*, particularly Denise Crosby's role as a policewoman. As a fan of hers, I would like to replace it. Will reimburse all VHS/S-VHS costs.

Kevin Tuttle  
11700 East Waterman, #258  
Wichita KS 67207

I've been looking for copies of an old British TV series called *U.F.O.* Also, if anybody has some old copies of *The Wild, Wild West* with Robert Conrad, let me know. I have lots of stuff, so give me a shout.

Paul Breitband  
505 Route 10 E  
Randolph NJ 07869

I'm a big fan of Megan Porter Follows and would like a video of her 1980-81 series, *The Baxters*. Also, does anyone have a taping of Megan answering phone pledges on Saturday Mar. 4, 1989 at WETA PBS channel 26 in Washington, D.C. when *Anne of Green Gables* was aired? I'll be glad to trade or reimburse for copies.

Richard Kannarr  
704 North 16th Street  
Harrisburg PA 17103

I am trying to find any or all episodes of a short-lived television series called *Quark*, which first aired about 1978. It was a comedy take-off about a garbage collection space ship commanded by Captain Quark and a misfit crew. I will happily reimburse any expenses for a copy.

Randall Moe  
326 West 550 N  
Orem UT 84057

I am desperately looking for a copy of the music video *Alice Cooper & Friends* from 1979 with Sha-na-na. Also, any video with Sha-na-na; I'm a big fan without luck. Will gladly pay all expenses. Help!

Chuck Blackford  
1969 South Kirkman Road, #21  
Orlando FL 32811

I remember when *Boston Blackie*, *Highway Patrol* and the TV version of *Dick Tracy* with Ralph Byrd were first on in the '50s. I haven't seen any in decades. VHS or Beta copies of any would be most welcome. All costs will be gladly reimbursed.

Tom Chenevert  
Box 181,  
Dunstable MA 01827



**Klaatu Barada Nikto:** Patricia Neal meets her computer date in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

Help! I am looking for a good quality VHS copy of an old '50s/'60s Sci-Fi movie: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. I have no idea who the characters were, but I'm hoping someone can help me out.

Charles C. Wright  
9292 Imogene Street, #404  
Houston TX 77036

I am looking for a complete copy of the 1992 Tony Awards broadcast. I'll gladly reimburse expenses for a VHS copy.

Rob Davis  
2 Hamilton Street  
Farmingdale NY 11735

If anyone has a copy of the Kung-Fu classic *Five Fingers of Death*, I would appreciate your calling me collect at 619-689-8487.

James E. Anderson  
9556 Carroll Cyn Road, #141  
San Diego CA 92126-4901

WLIW (channel 21) in Long Island broadcast some British TV comedies I'm looking for. They are *Man About the House*, *Robin's Nest*, *The Lovers*, *Doctor in the House* and *Doctor at Large*. I will pay all expenses for any episodes.

Dan Wetzel  
Box 991244  
Cleveland OH 44199  
Phone: 216-238-5870

I am interested in finding VHS tapes of MTV from its inception to 1987. If requested, I will supply blank tapes and cost of postage and handling. If tapes are not required, I'll reimburse the cost of same.

John S. Overfield  
500 Fair, #61  
Henderson KY 42420

I would love to have a copy of the *Oprah Winfrey Show* special with Michael Jackson. Also, if anyone has a copy of *Superbowl '93* with Michael Jackson at the half-time, please contact me. If anyone has a VHS copy I will gladly pay for postage and a tape.

Tanya Horn  
8148 West Fairground Road  
Holton IN 47023

I am searching for a VHS copy of the *Miss America Pageant* which aired September 17, 1983. Vanessa Williams, then Miss New York, won the title. I will reimburse expenses.

Jim W. Barr  
Route 1, Box 11-F  
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Send those requests for hard-to-find tapes to Collector's Clearinghouse, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001. Video Magazine DOES NOT locate tapes; this is a reader-to-reader service only, so please do not send a self-addressed envelope. Requests for copyrighted material must be for personal use only. You may offer to reimburse expenses, but the Clearinghouse is not open to requests for purchase or sale of tapes.

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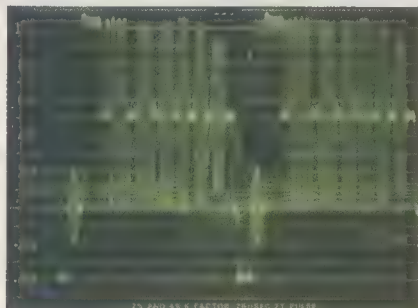


## PANASONIC COMBI PLAYER



*By Brent Butterworth*

I've always had a love/hate relationship with laserdisc players. In the last five years, I've found lots of players—at prices from about \$600 to \$3,500—that produce nearly perfect pictures. But I've also found many players—some at very high prices—that



Multiburst pattern showing frequency response of LX-600, which is typical for a laserdisc player.

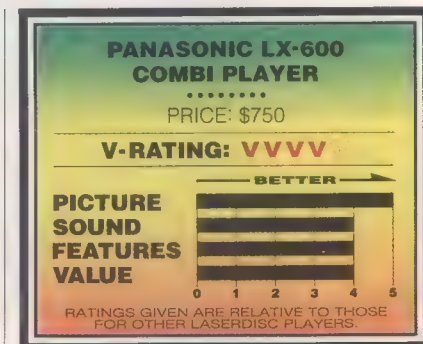
have noticeable faults. Because the quality of most manufacturers' work varies from year to year and model to model, I've found it hard to recommend a

specific brand, with one exception—Panasonic.

All of the Panasonic players we've tested, including the LX-101, LX-900 and LX-1000, have produced great pictures and sound. And the LX-600 may be my favorite Panasonic player yet.

The LX-600 offers automatic side-changing, but no digital effects on CLV discs. And that's fine with me. In my experience, the only digital-effects players that produce pictures as good as simpler players are Pioneer's mega-expensive Elite models, like the \$2,500 CLD-97.

Instead of digital effects, Panasonic uses clear scan, which gives you alternating still and black frames on CLVs. I find this more esthetically pleasing than the rolling images produced by many basic laserdisc players. (On CAV discs, you



get smooth searching without black frames.) Of course, the LX-600 won't give you still frames, slow motion or speed play on CLV discs.

Like all combi players, the LX-600 plays laserdiscs, CDs and CD-Videos. To

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**HOW TO READ THE RATINGS**  
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By Stewart Applegath

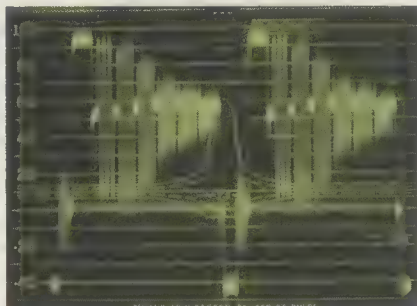
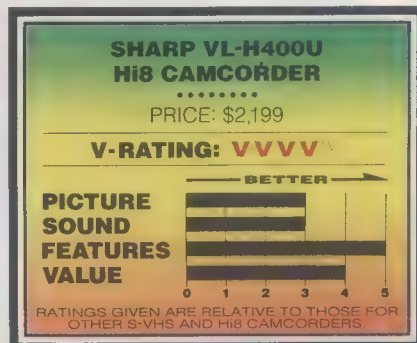
If a piece of equipment can be said to have created a genuine paradigm shift in the way we understand a technology, it would be the Sharp ViewCam. The innovative design of the VL-H400U ViewCam makes the process of shooting video much more enjoyable. Sharp has updated this second-generation Hi8 version to make it easier to navigate and hold, and has also added some new effects.

As a result, the ViewCam is attracting buyers who previously wouldn't have used a camcorder regularly. Why? Because you don't have to keep your eye glued to a viewfinder. Subjects are not as intimidated—or irritated—by it. It doesn't obviously intrude.

Another major advantage of this camcorder is its versatility—one can

car or on a camping trip. You can use its video/audio input to dub tapes from your VHS VCR for this purpose.

The ViewCam has two sections joined by a swivel. On the right is a handle flanked by effects controls and



Multiburst pattern showing VL-H400U frequency response, which is somewhat rolled-off for Hi8.

play back tapes immediately, using it as a mini Hi8 TVCR. It includes an integral speaker and a headphone jack, so it's perfect for keeping your kids busy in the

topped with a cylinder for the camera. The handle also contains the battery. The left section incorporates the LCD screen and recorder.

The 270-degree swivel lets you turn the LCD screen in almost any position relative to the camera unit. This allows shooting from high or low angles. The ViewCam can even be turned around so you can shoot yourself and see the image at the same time. Turning the LCDs on most camcorders upside-down would result in an inverted image, but the ViewCam automatically flips the image on the LCD when the viewfinder is turned past a certain angle.

The ViewCam's viewing screen is an anti-glare color LCD that can be seen in  
*continued on  
page 28*

improve picture quality, Panasonic employs a digital timebase corrector, a dual-magnet disc clamp, an aspherical glass-lens pickup and a precision brushless direct-drive motor. We can't quantify the individual contributions of these components, but as we'll see, the end result is definitely impressive.

Besides digital effects, the only significant feature missing from the LX-600 is a jog dial, which makes it easy to step through videos frame by frame. The LX-600 does have a shuttle dial (on the remote and the front panel) for easy forward and reverse searching, plus bi-directional frame advance buttons.

The rear panel has two sets of stereo audio outputs, an S-video output and a video output. It also has a separate group of outputs (video, mono audio and DC) for connecting an optional RF convertor, which you'll need if your TV doesn't have direct video inputs. Few laser-disc players have RF convertors anymore—manufacturers have removed the convertors because they can cause interference with the video signal.

At the bottom of the jack  
*continued on page 28*





## PANASONIC VHS-C CAMCORDER

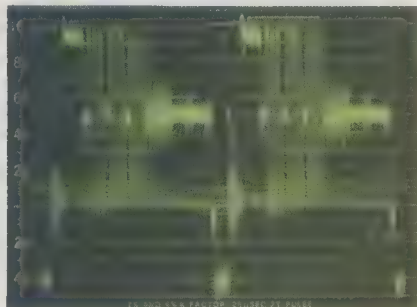
**TEST**  
**744**

By Timothy Liebe

The trend these days in camcorders is simpler, simpler, simpler — a mantra Panasonic obviously had in mind when it designed the PV-IQ604 VHS-C camcorder. The PV-IQ604's limited control over camera settings, small number of bells and whistles, and general ease of use combine with a lightweight, compact design to make it an appealing choice for the point-and-shoot crowd. (See also our review of

easy to handle and to use. As on many of the newer camcorders built by Matsushita (parent company of Panasonic), the remote has its own storage slot built right into the body. Having lost a camcorder remote or two in my time, I'm very pleased with this feature. In place of a lens cap, the PV-IQ604 uses an integral, shutter-like lens hood that automatically slides away when the unit is put into camera mode.

A five-watt video light included with the camcorder snaps onto a shoe on top;



Multiburst pattern showing PV-IQ604 frequency response, which is very good for VHS-C.

ProScan's PSC24C in this issue. The two camcorders are almost identical, but have some noteworthy differences.)

A number of simple yet effective features combine to make the PV-IQ604

### SPECS AND MEASUREMENTS

**Weight & Size (h/w/d):** 2 lbs., 4-5/8 x 4-1/8 x 6-7/8 inches

**Power Use:** 11 watts (16 watts with light)

**Image Sensor:** 1/3-inch CCD

**Lens:** f/1.6, 12x (5.4-64.8mm) 4-speed power zoom with continuous focus to macro range

**Filter Diameter:** 49mm

**Minimum Focusing Distance:** 1/2-inch at wide-angle, 40 inches at telephoto

**Autofocus:** contrast-type TTL continuous to macro in wide-angle, switchable to manual with thumb-wheel adjustment and pushbutton AF

**Iris:** auto with 3-mode BLC

**Fader:** hold-down type to black

**Shutter Speeds (sec.):** auto high-speed shutter 1/60-1/250, 1/60 (normal), 1/100, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1,000, 1/2,000, 1/4,000, 1/10,000

**White Balance:** auto only

**Viewfinder:** 0.7-inch color LCD

**Viewfinder Controls:** diopter focus, positioning, brightness

**Microphone:** mono electret condenser

**Jacks:** video/audio output, DC output for RF convertor

**Tape Speeds:** SP, EP

**Video Heads:** 2

**Cue & Review Search:** 3x

**Fast Forward/Rewind Time:** 4-1/2 min. for TC-20 tape

**Edit Protocol:** none

**Remote Control:** IR wireless with camera and playback controls

**Audio:** linear mono

**Key Features:** flying erase head, electronic image stabilizer, digital still and strobe, digital zoom to 120x, squeezed 16:9 mode, color viewfinder

### RESULTS

**Horizontal Resolution:** camera 250 lines, camera with EIS on 230 lines, recorder 240 lines, viewfinder 210 lines

**Picture S/N Ratios (dB):** unweighted video 37.7 SP, 36.5 EP; weighted video 45.5 SP, 43.2 EP; chroma AM 41.9 SP, 40.6 EP; chroma PM 41.8 SP, 41.3 EP

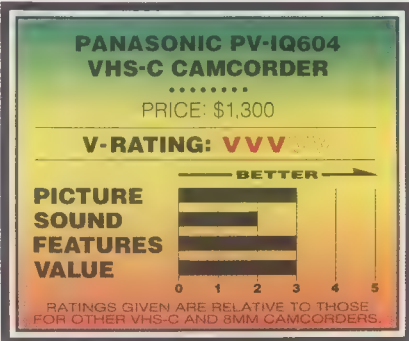
**Minimum Illumination:** 1.7 lux for 50 IRE

**Approx. Battery Life (man. focus/no zoom):** 125 min.

**Audio Frequency Response:** -3 dB: 75 Hz-7 kHz SP, 50 Hz-3 kHz EP

**Audio S/N:** 41.1 dB

**Audio Distortion:** 1.1%



it gets its power from the camcorder's battery. This doesn't provide much illumination, but it's enough for close-ups.

The color LCD viewfinder folds back so it rests snugly against the top of the housing when not in use. It can be brought forward when needed so that it either aligns parallel with the lens or sits at a 90-degree angle to it for shooting from chest height.

The manual focus wheel and auto-focus override button are unusually but conveniently placed at the lower right-hand front of the unit. If you've ever accidentally gotten your fingers in the shot while using a focus ring, you'll appreciate the horizontal, easy-to-manipulate focus wheel on the PV-IQ604.

I wish I could say the same about the playback controls, which are situated on the underside of the viewfinder so that they face up when the viewfinder is folded back into its rest position. I'm sure the designers of the PV-IQ604 thought this would be an effective use of surface area, but it makes through-the-viewfinder playback clumsy.

Except for the power/mode switch, intelligently located on the lower left front of the PV-IQ604, most of the other controls appear to be laid out randomly across the top spine of the camcorder. This may seem like a minor quibble until you try to find the still button (which is fairly far back behind the zoom lens controls) or the digital zoom (even further back) while shooting.

Most of the PV-IQ604's special features are useful for day-to-day shooting, like a simple A/V fade to and from black, electronic image stabilization and high-speed shutter for capturing clean stills and slow-motion of fast-moving events. A three-level backlight compensation control takes the place of a manual override for the automatic iris — not as good as a manual iris, but a lot better than a simple on/off backlight compensator. There's also digital still and strobe, digital zoom to 120x, and a 16:9 mode that squeezes a 16:9 picture into a 4:3 frame. (You'll need a 16:9 TV to view these images correctly.)

There is no override whatsoever for the automatic white balance, which can be a problem in constantly changing lighting conditions (like sunsets). There is also no time or tape counter display, except for an indicator which flashes once every 10 seconds while shooting.

Image quality is good for VHS-C, with only slight amounts of luminance and chrominance noise, though the colors seem to be somewhat subdued. Low-light capability is excellent at 1.7 lux, if slightly grainy. The stabilizer cuts horizontal resolution by only 20 lines — it doesn't seem to lose as much resolution as the original electronic stabilizers. The



**Flip to Play:** The tape transport controls rest awkwardly on the underside of the viewfinder.

autofocus is fair — the PV-IQ604 has more of a tendency to hunt in low light than many of the camcorders I've recently used.

Many *Video Magazine* articles have complained about color viewfinders, but I found the one on the PV-IQ604 to be quite good. I had no trouble focusing manually, and the picture was sharp and clear (although technical editor Lancelot Braithwaite found it a bit too soft for accurate focusing). Perhaps it just doesn't seem to be as much of a problem when you're dealing with the limited resolution of VHS.

The audio is a disappointment due to the mono omnidirectional condenser mic built into the camcorder, the lack of hi-fi, below-average frequency response (even for VHS linear track) and the presence of tape transport noise in recordings. Panasonic's decision not to include either an external microphone jack or headphone input is unfortunate, but probably to be expected on a low-end camcorder like this.

Despite this flaw, the Panasonic PV-IQ604 is a good overall camcorder for basic consumer use. While experienced videomakers might be frustrated by its limited manual controls and lack of special features, most people will be happy with its simplicity and good results. ■



### Dews and don'ts

On many Sony camcorders, the dew warning may continue to keep the equipment shut down long after the problem has "evaporated." The battery must be removed and re-attached to reset the system. James R.C. Adams, North Manchester, Indiana

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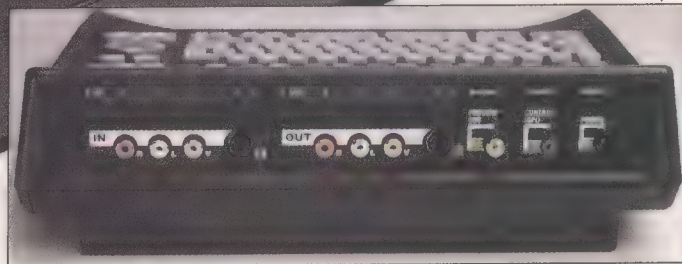
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## VIDEONICS VIDEO TITLER

**TEST**  
**745**

By Stewart Applegath

Video titlers have always been vaguely intimidating to me. Generally, high-end titlers confound me with endlessly intricate computer commands and sequences. On the other hand, low-end titlers produce crude, plain and blocky titles. As Hi8 and S-VHS camcorders have boosted the video quality available for home and prosumer videography, the quality gap between videotape and video titles has become that much more apparent.

Last year, Videonics came up with the TitleMaker, a titler that produces

handsome, professional-quality titles with a minimum of complication for \$500—a fraction of the cost of most character generators. Now Videonics has created an updated version, the \$599 TitleMaker 2000, with improvements that make it even easier to love. There are changes in both the video quality and the quantity of options available.

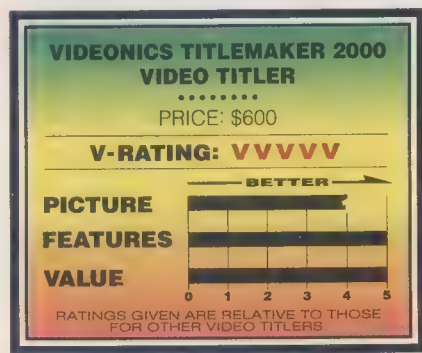
The TitleMaker's titles look *better* than those you see on many cable channels. The edges on the characters are smooth, with no jagged edges (unless you select the double-high, double-wide option). The titles don't look as great as the ones produced by a Video Toaster, but hey, it does a *great* job for the money.



A few of the good-looking new fonts (shown with outlines) available on Videonics' TitleMaker 2000.

The TitleMaker 2000 gives you more choices than you will ever use. Videonics has doubled the number of letter

*continued on page 29*



### SPECS AND MEASUREMENTS

**Weight & Size (h/w/d):** 2.6 lbs. excluding AC adapter, 4 x 12 x 9-1/2 inches

**Power Use:** 9 volts, approx. 9 watts

**Jacks:** power, S-video/video/stereo audio input and output, preview video output, GPI control input

**Titles/Graphics:** 23 fonts in 4 sizes; most fonts include capitals, lower case, punctuation, symbols and accented letters; total capacity 8,000 letters; 1,000 characters per line maximum; 40 to 60 lines per page; advanced scrolling; over one million colors (but only 64 colors per palette)

**Key Features:** preview mode, GPI trigger, demo mode, new fonts, lithium battery to preserve memory, project/page indexing

### RESULTS

**Horizontal Resolution:** titler 720 pixels, source bandpass over 10 MHz (800 lines)

**Vertical Resolution:** titler 480 pixels

**Picture S/N Ratios (dB):** unweighted luminance 67, weighted luminance 67.2, unweighted video 68.7, weighted video 69, chroma AM 66.2, chroma PM 51.3

**Insertion Loss:** less than 1 dB

**Audio Frequency Response:** 20 Hz-20 kHz, +0.42/-0.43 dB

**Dynamic Range:** over 90 dB

**Audio Distortion:** 0.03%

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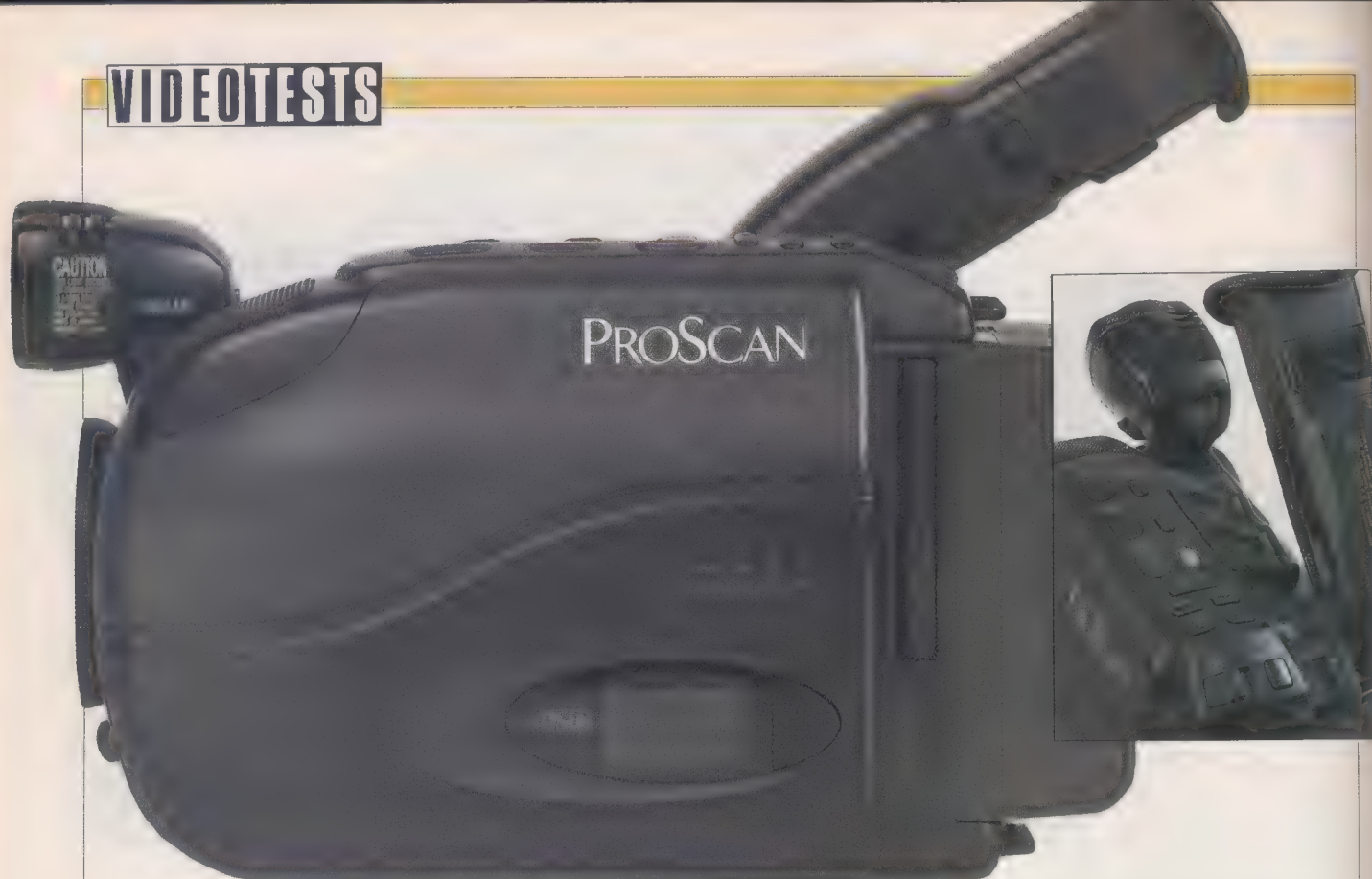
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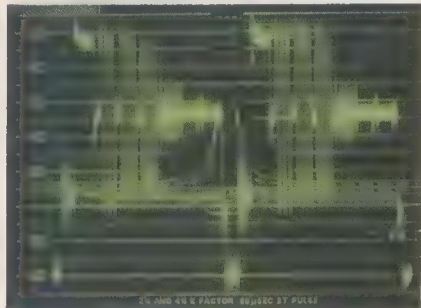
## PROSCAN VHS-C CAMCORDER



By Timothy Liebe

So-called "clone" camcorders have become quite common in the video world. Utilizing a base design from a manufacturer like Matsushita (Panasonic's parent company) or Sony, these camcorders offer virtually the same features and ergonomics as models put out under the original manufacturer's name. Sometimes, however, the clone has certain advantages over the original.

Case in point: the ProScan PSC24C VHS-C camcorder, which closely resembles yet subtly improves upon Panasonic's PV-IQ604 VHS-C camcorder. (If you haven't read this issue's PV-



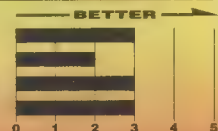
Multiburst pattern showing very good (for VHS) frequency response of PSC24C.

### PROSCAN PSC24C VHS-C CAMCORDER

PRICE: \$1,399

V-RATING: **VVV**

PICTURE  
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RATINGS GIVEN ARE RELATIVE TO THOSE FOR OTHER VHS-C AND 8MM CAMCORDERS.

### SPECS AND MEASUREMENTS

**Weight & Size (h/w/d):** 2 lbs., 4-5/8 x 4-1/8 x 6-7/8 inches

**Power Use:** 11 watts (16 watts with light)

**Image Sensor:** 1/3-inch CCD

**Lens:** f/1.6, 12x (5.4-64.8mm) 4-speed power zoom with continuous focus to macro range

**Filter Diameter:** 49mm

**Minimum Focusing Distance:** 1/2-inch at wide-angle, 40 inches at telephoto

**Autofocus:** contrast-type TTL continuous to macro in wide-angle, switchable to manual with thumb-wheel adjustment and pushbutton AF

**Iris:** auto with 3-mode BLC

**Fader:** hold-down type to black

**Shutter Speeds (sec.):** auto high-speed shutter 1/60-1/250, 1/60 (normal), 1/100, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1,000, 1/2,000, 1/4,000, 1/10,000

**White Balance:** auto only

**Viewfinder:** 0.7-inch color LCD

**Viewfinder Controls:** diopter focus, positioning, brightness

**Microphone:** mono electret condenser

**Jacks:** video/audio output, DC output for RF converter

**Tape Speeds:** SP, EP

**Video Heads:** 2

**Cue & Review Search:** 3x

**Fast Forward/Rewind Time:** 4-1/2 min. for TC-20 tape

**Edit Protocol:** none

**Remote Control:** IR wireless with camera and playback controls

**Audio:** linear mono

**Key Features:** flying erase head, electronic image stabilizer, digital still and strobe, digital zoom to 120x, squeezed 16:9 mode, color viewfinder

### RESULTS

**Horizontal Resolution:** camera 250 lines, camera with EIS on 230 lines, recorder 240 lines, viewfinder 210 lines

**Picture S/N Ratios (dB):** unweighted video 38 SP, 36.5 EP; weighted video 44.1 SP, 43.4 EP; chroma AM 41.9 SP, 38.8 EP; chroma PM 42 SP, 39.7 EP

**Minimum Illumination:** 1.2 lux for 50 IRE

**Approx. Battery Life (man. focus/no zoom):** 125 min.

**Audio Frequency Response:** -3 dB: 75 Hz-7 kHz SP, 50 Hz-3 kHz EP

**Linear Audio S/N:** 41.1 dB

**Audio Distortion:** 1.1%

tronic image stabilization (EIS) feature.

Effects and playback buttons on the PSC24C are arrayed across the top spine of the camcorder, which is a greater virtue than it might first appear. Unlike Panasonic's apparent tendency to strew buttons willy-nilly across camcorder bodies, the ProScan follows a logical progression in both location (camera controls to the front, playback controls to the back) and size.

By and large, however, both camcorders are very similar in their virtues and flaws. Both offer decent color LCD viewfinders, a remote that snaps into a storage slot, an automatically retracting metal lens door in place of a lens cap, and A/V outputs using standard RCA plugs. On the downside, neither possesses an external microphone jack to

with the IQ604 sample we tried. Low-light capability is especially fine, with a minimum illumination of 1.2 lux and, even more important for practical purposes, a surprising lack of graininess under most indoor shooting conditions.

The image stabilizer and color viewfinder offer the same good quality I encountered on the Panasonic camcorder. Audio quality is mediocre, both due to the inadequate mono camcorder microphone and the surprisingly loud tape transport noise.

Overall, I slightly preferred the performance of the ProScan model, both in terms of the picture quality and the autofocus, which seemed a bit more stable. But these minor differences could be the result of normal production variances (I used the same tape in both machines.) The ProScan lists for \$100 more, but the street prices of both are unpredictable. You might even find the ProScan selling for less.

The ProScan PSC24C is a limited but well-designed VHS-C consumer camcorder. Its comfortable ergonomics and good image quality (despite its audio weaknesses) make it well worth considering if you're in the market for something that'll give you good footage without a great deal of fuss.

**Inside Edge:**  
The flat, tiny Pro-Scan remote tucks away into a slot on the camcorder's left side.



supplement the built-in mic (an unfortunate and increasingly common flaw) or any override for automatic white balance. Also, both use Matsushita's unusual powered light shoe design, which is incompatible with third-party accessories like higher-wattage camcorder lights. (Both models come with a tiny, five-watt color enhancement light.)

Another common flaw, and one which is shared with many other Matsushita-designed consumer camcorders, is the lack of A/V inputs. Since both the PSC24C and the IQ604 offer flying erase heads, it would be nice to have inputs so you could insert scenes from another tape.

Like the IQ604, the PSC24C comes with relatively few special features. It offers A/V fade to and from black, along with digital still and strobe, and what appears to be Matsushita's determination to push 16:9 video images via a squeezed-picture wide setting. There is, however, no timer or tape counter (not even the 10-second shooting time signal that the Panasonic offers), and no titler.

The PSC24C's image quality is actually quite good for VHS-C, with richer colors and less luminance noise than

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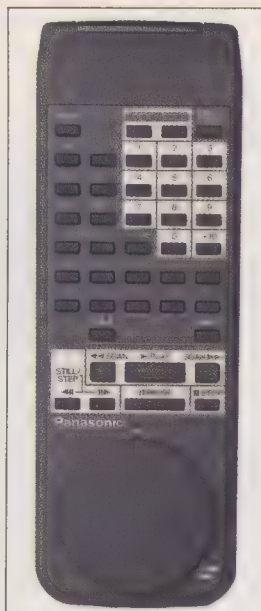
## COMBI PLAYER

continued from page 21

panel is a Toslink optical digital audio output, for connecting a high-quality external digital-to-analog convertor. Audiophiles prefer the coaxial digital outputs found on Philips players and some new Pioneers; we wish Panasonic and Sony would make the switch on their laserdisc players, too.

Operationally, the LX-600 presented no problems for me. But then again, neither has any laserdisc player I can remember—for the most part, they're as easy to use as CD players.

The LX-600's picture quality is superb—it's in that small camp of laserdisc players in which we really can't find anything to complain about, picture-wise. In a direct comparison with Pioneer's \$3,500 LD-S2 (one of our two reference laserdisc players), the only noteworthy difference between the two was that the output level of the LX-600 is a bit lower than that of the LD-S2, so you may need to bring up the brightness and contrast slightly on your set. Detail and color



**Combi Controller:**  
The remote for the LX-600 has a shuttle ring but no jog dial.

rendition were outstanding. There was no visible noise on well-mastered discs, or on the test patterns we used.

The player does have one problem—its luminance/chrominance separator (which feeds the S-video output) is not as good as those in today's best TV

sets—it produces considerable dot crawl on horizontal edges of objects in the picture. If you have an excellent TV set, ignore the LX-600's S-video output and use the composite (RCA jack) video output, which will eliminate the problem if your TV has a good luminance/chrominance separator. You should try both types of cables to be sure.

The digital-to-analog convertor uses Panasonic's MASH noise-shaping technology to improve rendition of low-level detail. The result is respectable sound for a \$750 player, considerably better than that of bargain-basement digital audio gear. It doesn't produce the detail or the sense of space created by high-end digital-to-analog convertors, but it's more than good enough for most home theater systems.

For the moment, the \$750 LX-600 looks like a great buy for those seeking a side-changing combi player. But Pioneer and Sony have both just introduced similar models in the \$600 range, so our price/performance standards for this segment of the laserdisc player market could soon change. ■

## VIEWCAM

continued from page 21

sunlight, though I found it difficult to see on the brightest days. You can adjust the brightness, color and tint of the LCD. I highly recommend buying the accessory pop-up sunshield that doubles as a protective cover for the LCD—the screen is relatively fragile and marks up with fingerprints quickly.

The ViewCam has a number of other features, like digital image stabilization and fades to and from white. All here would vote to change this fade to black. It also has some popular effects: a letterbox function, digital still, strobe and snap. Still holds an image indefinitely, while snap records five-second stills. Also included is a feature that we're glad to see becoming more common: a sliding lens cover that replaces the lens cap. If I had my way, this would be standard equipment on all camcorders.

The ViewCam also has full-range autofocus, which allows extreme close-up shooting. While not the fastest I've used, it handles most situations competently. It has a manual-focus mode, but it's not easy to manipulate—separate buttons under the LCD screen control it.

The stabilizer is an important part of this unit in that it would be difficult to hold this camcorder steady over long pe-

Advertising Supplement

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riods of shooting. (This said, it is an incredibly *comfortable* camera to hold—it just feels *right*.) The stabilizer does a good job, with little lag or smear evident.

Sharp has changed the location of some controls to good effect. The separate wide/tele buttons have been replaced by a zoom rocker that is easier to use. Though we didn't find the front-facing record/pause button on the previous model difficult to get used to, moving it back beside the rocker makes more sense. The digital effects and stabilizer control are also within easy thumb-reach.

The recorder/LCD unit has a leg that folds out, allowing the camcorder to be left standing without worrying about it falling or being knocked over. A hatch behind the LCD opens to reveal the tape carrier mechanism, which is a bit slow to move a tape in and out. The brightness control above the LCD doubles as the speaker volume control in playback mode. Sharp has kept the jacks for external microphone and headphones, features that are becoming rare in these days of hide-the-control user-friendliness.

The ViewCam's picture quality is good, but not spectacular. Recorded color is noticeably muted. You can adjust your TV monitor accordingly, but this generates more noise and some bleeding. Detail is average. With the electronic stabilizer on, the picture loses about 15 percent of its resolution and some of its size. The LCD's resolution is fine for most applications. Audio reproduction is average—it was difficult to get any genuine stereo effect using the built-in microphone.

I find those who see and try the ViewCam are hooked instantly, leaving conventional camcorders to gather dust in the closet. Though my brother's newborn is pretty irresistible, he finds it awkward to shoot the baby with his Sony CCD-TR81—a foreign object separating him from real-time experience. No such reservations with the ViewCam—it saw double-duty when I left it with him for a day.

I think the ViewCam is the future of consumer camcorders. The large color LCD is great to look at—more like the real world than a black-and-white viewfinder. No more squinting or bumping into people and things. Though deficient in the versatility offered by easy-to-operate manual controls, it is wonderful to hold and use.

The ViewCam is beautifully put together, form following well its functions. By recording events without interfering with them, the ViewCam will *add to* rather than *detract from* such experi-



**Pocket Pal:**  
Sharp's ViewCam remote has touchpads rather than buttons, making it easier to clean.

ences, especially for those shooting them. Though Sharp must do a bit of catch-up in the audio and image-quality departments, the ViewCam's LCD screen and radically different configuration give it an overwhelming advantage over traditional camcorders. ■

## TITLER

continued from page 24

styles with over 90 font and size combinations, which now include script fonts. You can add shadows and outlines, and choose from three letter-spacing configurations and three character thicknesses. You can have titles simple and svelte or bold and blocky. Borders can be placed above, beside or around the blocks of text.

You can use images from a camcorder or a VCR as the background (or for the lettering itself), and generate a huge palette of colored backgrounds. You choose the characters' color, borders and outline color from a menu or an on-screen color mixer that gives you practically unlimited control over color—more than a million choices.

While the 2000 still offers the rainbow patterns of the previous titler, Videonics has added funky, vibrating patterns that actually throb and glow in real time—you'll think Jerry Garcia has been tampering with this box. Any of the backgrounds can be mixed with live video at any level you choose. ▶

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Titles can be scrolled in from the side or bottom, dissolved in and out, and wiped on and off in 18 different ways. The crawls are especially nice, giving you the running-stock-quotation effect at 10 speeds.

The TitleMaker 2000 can hold more than 8,000 characters of text. As with the original TitleMaker, you can divide the text into hundreds of separate pages. But with the 2000, you can also divide it into numbered projects, making the titles much easier to find. Specific projects and pages are indexed by title, project and page number.

The 2000 has S-video and video inputs and outputs, audio inputs and outputs (just a loop-through for convenience), and a QWERTY keyboard barely big enough for touch-typing. Trying to use another professional titling unit a few years ago, I remember how frustrating it was to find out I couldn't do subtitles in another language without spending another \$900 for the necessary software. But the 2000 provides accented letters for over 16 languages and other special characters.

Videonics has also added a preview output. A monitor connected to the

preview output shows all the programming icons, while a monitor connected to the regular output shows the finished title sequence. In this way you can work on one title sequence while you're recording, displaying or broadcasting another.

Before the TitleMaker 2000, I hadn't used titlers much. But I found that once I learned a few basic concepts, the 2000 was very easy and intuitive to use. Every once in a while I got stymied, but the instruction manual is straightforward and I could work my way through it with a bit of patience. The TitleMaker 2000's limitations seem to be those imposed by your imagination, rather than by Videonics.

The TitleMaker doesn't noticeably degrade video signals passed through it—with a 10 megahertz (800 horizontal lines) bandpass, and most signal-to-noise ratios in the 60-decibel range, it's very clean.

One of the few shortcomings of the older model was that it had unstable

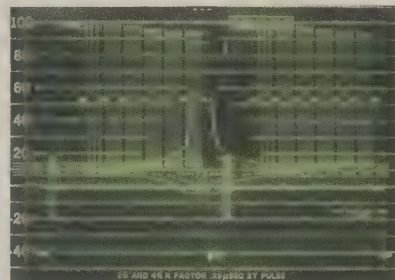
sync, which made it impossible to feed its signal into a Panasonic video mixer. Videonics seems to have corrected this on the 2000. When we hooked up the output of the original TitleMaker to a Panasonic WJ-AVE7 mixer, the sync problems caused troublesome vertical jitter. Although there are still slight elements of jitter evident on our vector-scope, the TitleMaker 2000 test sample worked fine when its output was fed to the same mixer.

There is really nothing that compares to the TitleMaker 2000—it is a beautiful anomaly, a unit capable of professional-looking, low-cost titles, with a huge array of fonts, colors, patterns and effects. Its competitors are much more expensive, with fewer features and choices; or less expensive, but with poor-quality titles. As another *Video Magazine* editor bluntly put it, "You would be stupid to buy anything else." Perhaps other manufacturers will get the message, but in the meantime, this titler is far ahead of the pack. ■

## HOW TO READ THE RATINGS

Last month, we introduced major changes in our Videotests. These changes make the ratings easier to understand, and provide a more precise measure of a product's performance, features and value.

First, we've gone to a five-point rating scale. You can compare previ-



Waveform monitor with multiburst pattern.

ously reviewed products to current products like this: Five is excellent, four is very good, three is good or average, two is fair and one is weak or poor.

A product earning a five performs as well as or better than anything in its class. A four indicates good performance with minor flaws. A three denotes average quality—good, but with significant flaws. A two indicates quality that is below-average, but still acceptable. A one means that the product is very disappointing in that area.

We've also introduced two new ratings: the V-Rating, a combination of the performance and features ratings, with no consideration of cost; and the Value rating, which represents a price/performance ratio. A Value rating of five means the product offers amazing performance for the price. Four and three indicate good and average values, respectively. A two tells you to think twice—other products offer the same (or better) performance for much less money. And a Value rating of one means the product is outrageously overpriced.

All ratings are relative to other products in the same class—those you would consider buying instead of the product being tested. The product classes are TVs, S-VHS/Hi8 camcorders, VHS/8mm camcorders, S-VHS/Hi8 VCRs, VHS/8mm VCRs, laserdisc players, editing equipment and audio equipment.

We've also added photos of readouts from our test equipment. Usually, we'll show a multiburst pattern, as seen on a waveform monitor. The multiburst shows the video frequency response of the component in question—the better the frequency response, the higher the horizontal resolution. Each multiburst displays two sets of vertical bars, one per field. In each set, the bars from left to right represent 0.5, 1.5, 2, 3, 3.58 and 4.2 megahertz. (Last month, we incorrectly indicated the two left bars represented 1 and 2 MHz.) As the bars on the right of each set shrink, so does the detail in the picture. ■



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# HOME THEATER

continued from page 14

To make sure the CLD-97's 2.4-volt output didn't cause the KC-X1's problems, I tried feeding the KC-X1 from an MSB PS-1 digital-to-analog convertor, which has a very high, six-volt output. (I cut the level on the KC-X1 four decibels to compensate.) The KC-X1 actually sounded *better* with the PS-1—it didn't seem bothered by the PS-1's high output, and the PS-1's rather polite sound was a better match for the KC-X1.

Surprisingly, I occasionally found myself enjoying the sound of the KC-X1—until I heard it compared with the Model Four. In a few situations, one or two of our editors picked the KC-X1 over the Model Four and the CP-3. And several KC-X1 owners have written to tell us they think the unit sounds fine.

To many, the KC-X1 will indeed sound fine. But we don't feel *Video Magazine* readers need us to seek out products that are "fine" or "acceptable." We're looking for products that rank among the best in their price classes. And we think the Kenwood KC-X1's

sound is subpar compared with that of the best \$1,000 surround decoders we've tried: the Fosgate Model Four and the Adcom GTP-600.

What does this say about Lucasfilm's THX certification program? Not that THX products are bad, because the best surround decoders are all THX-certified. In fact, compared with another prominent audio licenser, Dolby, Lucasfilm's record is positively stunning. For example, I've tried some rack systems and receivers wearing the Dolby Pro-Logic logo that make the KC-X1 sound heavenly. (However, Dolby doesn't make the ambitious quality claims Lucasfilm does.) And since we first noted problems with the KC-X1, Lucasfilm has been very responsive, showing real determination to find the roots of the problems we noticed.

No, our results tell us that the THX logo is simply a guarantee that a product meets certain standards—but not necessarily *your* standards or *our* standards. A THX-certified product will certainly meet Lucasfilm's standards, but will it meet *Video Magazine's* standard of ranking among the best in its price class? Maybe. Maybe not.

The final task of evaluating a THX

product—or any product, for that matter—must fall to you. We can tell you if a product meets our standards, but only you can determine if our standards (or Lucasfilm's) are relevant to your tastes and needs. ■

## TECH TIPS

### Ground control

If you're experiencing a noisy video picture on your cable hookup, ask the cable company to install a separate earth ground at the cable service entrance. It's easy, if your living arrangement permits it. All the cable technician has to do is pound a three- or four-foot grounding rod into the earth and attach the rod to the cable ground. Usually the cable ground is just hooked up to a cold water pipe, which can generate all types of picture interference, as it did in my case. When I asked my cable guys to make the change, then look at my TV picture, they could see the difference. And were they surprised!

Johan Granfeldt  
Los Osos, California

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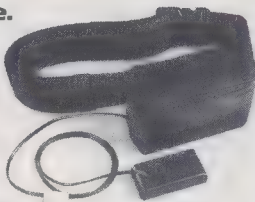
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# MULTIMEDIA PLAYGROUND

*A guided tour of five systems primed for the information age*

If we are to believe everything we see and hear on TV and in the newspapers, we'll all soon be surfing happily on the information superhighway. The promise of catching an all-digital wave—with access to 500 channels of interactive programming, movies on demand, video games, home shopping services and more—is enough to make anyone dream of the Big Kahuna. Unfortunately, a distribution system for all this exciting new content hasn't yet been built. The waves of interactive multimedia are still breaking close to shore.

But that doesn't mean we can't get our toes wet. Thanks to the vast storage capabilities of CD-ROM and related optical disc formats, developers can store sufficient amounts of data to include sound, text, graphics and video on five-inch discs. The same types of multimedia programs that will one day be beamed into our homes are available right now on disc, as long as you've got the hardware required to run them.

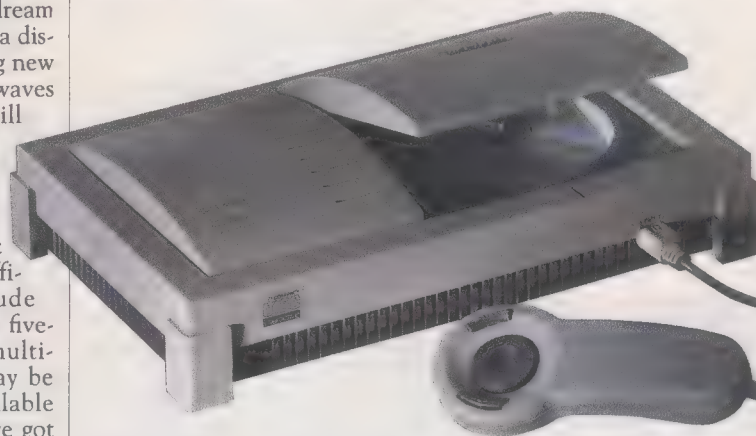
There are two basic ways of accessing multimedia on disc: with a CD-ROM drive linked to a personal com-



**Making News:** The *Voyeur* CD-i incorporates video.

puter, or through a stand-alone system designed to be connected to a TV. Both types have gained popularity in recent times thanks to declining prices of CD-ROM drives and increasingly compelling CD-based software.

Because there are still significantly more TV sets than computers in American homes, a number of companies are now marketing sophisticated set-top multimedia CD systems capable of delivering not only videogames, but reference materials, educational titles and interactive movies. So we decided to



**Down to Earth:** At \$299, the Magnavox CDi450 breaks the price barrier for multimedia players.

take a fresh look at the five current set-top machines: Philips' Compact Disc-Interactive (CD-i), Panasonic's 3DO Interactive Multiplayer, Pioneer's LaserActive system, Sega CD and Commodore's Amiga CD32. Though a number of new systems will be introduced over the next 12 months (see "Crowded at the Beach"), the current batch of multimedia machines provides a wealth of interactive pleasures and a preview of even richer experiences to come. Hang ten!

## CD-i

Philips' CD-i system is the grandfather of the group, utilizing core technology developed in the mid-1980s. Like the audio compact disc, CD-i was developed jointly by Philips and Sony, though only Philips is currently selling the hardware in the U.S. and promoting the technology as a worldwide standard for interactive multimedia.

At the heart of the CD-i system is a 16-bit 68070 microprocessor, based on the venerable Motorola 68000 chip. This technology has been surpassed by faster, more powerful processors, but Philips counters this drawback with a sizable library of more than 150 CD-i titles it has built up over the past four

years. In addition to software created specifically for the system, CD-i players can also play audio CDs and CD+Graphics (CD+G) discs, along with Kodak's Photo CDs, which store snapshots on disc. Prices, once as high as \$1,000, have fallen to \$399.

Plagued by slow sales since its introduction, CD-i once looked like it was destined for a quiet death. But the system got a welcome boost from the introduction of the industry's first add-on full-motion video (FMV) cartridge (\$249), which heightens the performance of the hardware and allows it to play MPEG-quality video, such as that encompassed by the new Video CD standard.

The FMV cartridge, which Philips calls Digital Video, pumps up the performance of the CD-i architecture by adding a multitasking operating system—which allows various chores to be performed simultaneously—and doubling

the on-board memory available to game developers.

This summer, Philips will introduce two new down-sized, top-loading CD-i players at even lower prices. The Magnavox CDI450 comes with a wired remote and free software, and costs \$299; a scaled-down FMV cartridge will go for \$249. The model CDI550 is bundled with the FMV cartridge, free software and a special jack for two-player gaming (the 450 accepts a splitter that is sold separately), and costs \$499.

The combination of increased performance and reduced prices has allowed Philips to regain the attention of software developers like Virgin Interactive and LucasArts, who once again seem very interested in the format. Meanwhile, the FMV cartridge not only lets users experience elaborate, video-laden games and "edutainment" programs, but full-length movies on CD-i (though all video CDs are currently limited to 74 minutes per disc). Thanks to agreements with Paramount, MGM/UA, PolyGram and Orion, more than 80 Hollywood movies, including *Apocalypse Now* and *Goldfinger*, are planned for release on CD-i this year.

### 3DO MULTIPLAYER

If hype were sales, the much-ballyhooed 3DO system would already be the winner in the multimedia derby. In-

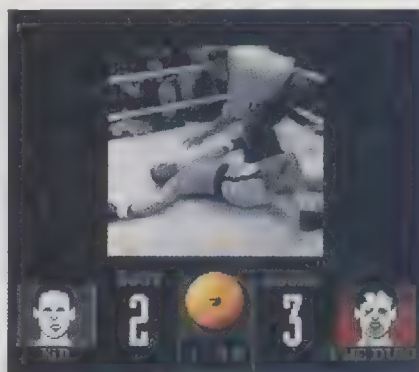


troduced to great fanfare last year, and like CD-i, heralded as the next VCR, 3DO hit the market backed by a formidable cadre of investors—AT&T, Time Warner, Electronic Arts and Matsushita—and some impressive demos highlighting the system's formidable graphics capabilities.

Although Panasonic is currently the only company manufacturing and marketing a 3DO system—called the FZ-1 REAL 3DO Interactive Multiplayer—several other companies, including AT&T, Sanyo, Toshiba, Samsung, Gold-Star and Creative Labs, have said they will launch an array of 3DO-based products in the coming months. New hard-

ware will include additional stand-alone players, players with networking capabilities, and in Creative Labs' case, add-on boards to convert personal computers to 3DO-ready machines.

At the heart of the 3DO system is a 32-bit RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) processor, which until recently was only found in developers' workstations. Other features include a double-speed CD-ROM drive and expansion ports on the back and sides for future peripherals such as a keyboard or mouse, an add-on FMV cartridge or a networking device. Like CD-i, the 3DO Multiplayer plays proprietary software as well as standard audio CDs, CD+Gs



**Games to Go:**  
With Sega's CDX portable (left), you can take hot titles like *Prize Fighter* (above) along for the ride.

## MULTIMEDIA

and Photo CDs.

The 3DO player uses multiple processors—seven in all—to provide impressive graphics performance. In addition to the 32-bit RISC processor, the 3DO player includes a pair of custom animation engines that break down graphics into animation cels that can be manipulated rapidly “on-the-fly” to create fluid motion.

As a result of its architecture, 3DO Multiplayers can select from a palette of 16.7 million colors, with an animation speed of 64 million pixels per second. (By contrast, CD-i players offer a choice of 128 colors, and an animation speed of 11 million pixels per second.) However, 3DO has not yet introduced an MPEG cartridge for full-motion video, though one is expected this fall. When the optional FMV cartridge becomes available, 3DO systems will be able to reproduce full-motion, near-VHS-quality MPEG video.

Until then, 3DO Multiplayers make do with a software-based compression technology called Cinepak to produce digitized video clips that run between 15 and 20 frames per second, well below the 30 frames-per-second rate of true MPEG video. However, unlike some other systems that use Cinepak compression, such as Apple’s Macintosh, 3DO can display a full-screen picture rather than just an inset window of video.

Like CD-i, the price of 3DO hard-



**Wicked Games:** Discs like *Twisted* (above left) and *John Madden Football* (right) play on Panasonic’s 3DO (top).

ware has declined steadily so that players can now be purchased for under \$500. When it becomes available later this year, the FMV cartridge is expected to cost around \$250.

After a slow start—just a handful of titles were available when the product launched—software for the 3DO system has been growing steadily. There are approximately 40 titles now available, and more than 200 in development. Recent releases, such as *John Madden Football*, *Total Eclipse* and *Twisted*, an

innovative take on game shows, are an indication that developers are learning how to make exciting 3DO software.

### SEGA CD

With its single-speed CD-ROM drive and 16-bit architecture, Sega CD doesn’t constitute a state-of-the-art multimedia system. But it does offer a low-cost entry into the CD game market.

Sega CD also offers a vast (200+) library of great games, and an army of developers who now have a few years of experience optimizing software for the system. While Sega CD does boost the performance of the Genesis console (most notably memory and speed), it can’t overcome Genesis’ limited color palette of 64 colors—only 16 can be displayed at one time—and relatively slow animation speed of one million pixels per second.

The Sega CD/Genesis combination features three processors: two 16-bit Motorola 68000s and an 8-bit Z-80. While colors are limited, the CPU manages a speedy 12MHz, the same as 3DO, which is one reason why side-scrolling games like *Sonic The Hedgehog* run so well on the system. Sega recently fortified its standing in the game field with the introduction of the CDX, (\$399) a beautifully designed portable version of the Sega CD.



**Spare Parts:** Pioneer’s CLD-A100 LaserActive Player uses various control packs to enhance its capabilities.

Sega video segments generally look blocky, though recent CD-based games are noticeably better than earlier ones. While the Sega CD player isn't capable of playing MPEG-quality full-motion video, the system uses a customized version of Cinepak digital video compression called TruVideo. Thoughtful engineering in newer games such as *Tomcat Alley* cleverly cloak the annoying access delays generally associated with CD-ROM drives.

## LASERACTIVE

LaserActive is Pioneer's attempt to add additional multimedia capabilities to the laserdisc format it has long supported. The system consists of a conventional combination CD/laserdisc player, the Pioneer CLD-A100, and three optional control packs which allow it to also play Sega, NEC or Pioneer LaserKaraoke discs. Like virtually all laserdisc players, the basic unit handles laserdiscs and CDs of all sizes.

By adding the PAC-S10 module, which was developed by Sega of Japan, LaserActive can play eight- and 12-inch LaserActive Mega-LDs (a new type of multimedia disc) as well as existing Sega CDs, regular Genesis ROM cartridges and standard CD+G discs. Two other modules are also available. The PAC-N10 module lets the A100 accept NEC's new eight- and 10-inch LaserActive LD-ROM<sup>2</sup> discs, as well as Turbo Technologies' DuoSoft discs and game cartridges, and CD+G titles. Pioneer's PAC-K1 module turns the player into a LaserKaraoke machine.

Because the system is laserdisc-based, it delivers high-quality analog

*continued on page 48*

## Crowded At The Beach

If the large number of stand-alone multimedia systems seems a bit confusing, hang on to your hat: As many as 13 different systems may soon be vying for shelf space.

The two reigning kings of the videogame world, Sega and Nintendo, have both announced next-generation game machines for shipment in '95. Sega will actually offer two options: an upgrade, called the Genesis Super32X, for existing Sega Genesis owners, and a new 32-bit system called Saturn. Super32X ships late this year and will allow Genesis owners to move up to 32-bit performance. The add-on cartridge, which uses the two 32-bit Hitachi chips designed for the Saturn, is expected to cost less than \$150.

Saturn is a 32-bit system using multiple processors and a double-speed CD-ROM drive, and will likely cost between \$250 and \$300. Another take on the Sega platform comes from JVC in the form of X'EYE, a Sega CD clone that adds karaoke capability. But at \$399, it's significantly pricier than Sega CD.

Nintendo is teaming up with workstation gurus Silicon Graphics for Project Reality, a 64-bit system that will use—at least initially—100-Megabyte silicon cartridges instead of CD-ROMs. A CD-ROM drive, however, is expected as an option. Estimated price: \$250. Atari has already introduced its new Jaguar system (\$250), a 64-bit cartridge-based unit that is gaining acceptance among developers. The company is expected to offer a CD-ROM drive (\$200) and MPEG add-on later this year.

Probably the biggest buzz coming from the multimedia/gaming world right now involves Sony's forthcoming PlayStation system. PlayStation will use a 32-bit RISC CPU, with multiple processors for graphics and sound and a double-speed CD-ROM drive. Expected in the U.S. by the fall of 1995, PlayStation will feature full-screen, full-motion video, and will have software support from big names like Capcom, Konami and Namco.

NEC, which was the first company to offer a CD-ROM accessory for a videogame system—the TurboGrafx-16—is rumored to be on its way back with a new 32-bit system called the FX that will feature a double-speed CD-ROM drive. Pricing and availability have yet to be announced.

—JW

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BY FRANK BEACHAM

# HYPE, HOPE & REALITY

*Why the video superhighway will take longer & cost more than anyone believed.*

Much of the information superhighway eventually will be paved with video. But the brave new world of slick interactive entertainment that is struggling to find forms and acceptance will take longer and cost more than its developers would like us to believe. Not all that glitters is interactive. Blown apart mega-mergers, technical difficulties, the true costs of new services and an uncertain regulatory environment are setting back important projects, and adding powerful

doses of reality to a process that was in danger of becoming more superhypeway than superhighway.

Most of us can see how the information revolution is shaking up and merging familiar technologies like television, telephone, personal computer and fax systems. But it's less clear how events are affecting home video, and where the line between fact and fantasy actually lies. A realistic picture of video's future along the superhighway includes many

of the services we've already been primed to anticipate, but it sets them in a time frame lengthened by unresolved issues and humongous development costs. What should we really expect? For a start:

- Digital technology is beginning to supplant analog NTSC television as the only route into the home, bringing with it visibly better TV pictures. Ditto for sound: for the first time, TV audio is becoming digital on all channels, and much of it will be surround.

- We'll see this year the first alternatives to cable, and be able to choose the quality of our home receiving system. There will be a greater array of programs and starting times; choices will be increasingly available when we want to watch them.

- In a few years we'll have the technical capability for video-on-demand, a service that will allow us to order virtually any movie or program for instant viewing. We'll also have interactivity. We'll be using our TV sets to play real-time videogames with friends across town, explore libraries and databases, shop, bank and conduct various other transactions.

- Ultimately, we'll have home-to-home video communications through an interactive information infrastructure. Virtually anyone will be able to make a video program and distribute it to the video "address" of anyone else. Anyone

**Building the Video Infobahn:** Creating an advanced video system is a nationwide job. Here's where key elements are being tested and developed.



will be able to become a video producer through a worldwide system of video e-mail.

● To facilitate this, desktop video will become inexpensive, giving both hobbyists and pros the power to create high-quality programs at home. Need a special effect? No problem. Dial up the special-effects computer at a high-end video service company and rent a few minutes of time with the latest effects software. Then download the result to your desktop computer.

Each of these technologies is do-able today, and plans are afoot to deploy them all. Many companies say their new video services will be here sooner rather than later. But don't bet on it. Announcements are often made by the need to impress Wall Street, and projects driven more by the fear of being left behind than by genuine breakthroughs have a way of making the future seem closer than it is, like the image of a truck in a rear-view mirror. The enormous challenges facing video applications on the info highway are easy to underestimate. Key technologies are still untested, financial risks are huge, and complex and costly physical infrastructures have to be constructed. Creating a large-scale, two-way, video-capable communications system will be among the most ambitious engineering projects ever undertaken.

Such a system must perform flawlessly across many kinds of networks while working as simply as a telephone. Yet the system's overall shape has still to be determined, according to Nathan P.

Myhrvold, senior vice president of technology at Microsoft Corp. "There are debates going on over whether we'll use smart TVs," he said. "Others say it's going to be personal computers. Others say it will all merge into one grand device, the Swiss Army knife of consumer electronics." Microsoft, itself, has agreements with Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI) and Rogers CableSystems, the largest cable operators in the U.S. and Canada, to develop a software system called Tiger for interactive cable and personal computers.

## BUILDING COSTS

Lately the reality of building the superhighway, particularly the high-speed video lanes, has begun to hit home. The failures of the \$21-billion merger between Bell Atlantic and TCI, and between Southwestern Bell and Cox Enterprises, the delay of Time Warner's Full Service Network in Orlando, Florida, TCI's decision to delay buying a million digital cable boxes from General Instrument, and numerous other troubled projects are raising questions about the real costs and difficulties of the video superhighway.

No one knows what it will really cost, but the numbers cited are in the same league as strategic defense projects. The *Wall Street Journal* guesstimated the cost of the highway at \$107 billion by adding up the capital spending plans of cable and phone companies, but noted that much of the money would be spent anyway. Another estimate pegs

the cost of wiring every home in the U.S. with fiber optics at more than \$100 billion, but is so much fiber-optic cable really necessary?

In fact, what is necessary? There's no consensus at all about what kind of wire should connect the video superhighway. A wire needs to be able to support 100,000 bits per second to transmit still pictures, 300,000 bits for CD-quality music and 3 million bits for video. Coaxial cable can carry about 1 gigabyte/second, far more than the 1 or 2 gigabits fiber optic cable now carries, but researchers are already pushing 10 gigabits/second through fiber and predicting they'll eventually hit 100. (Forget about copper phone wire; fiber can carry at least 125,000 times more information.)

The cost of hooking up just one home to the information superhighway will be between \$1,000 and \$1,500 with perhaps another \$500 needed for marketing, estimates David Londoner, managing director of Wertheim Schroder & Co., a New York-based investment firm specializing in the entertainment industry. "The technology is not yet perfected," said Londoner. "I don't mean to suggest there are insurmountable technical problems, but they are there and that, as well as the capital costs, implies to us that



# HYPE, HOPE

this thing is further away than a lot of people are forecasting."

However, if the highway is going to take longer to establish than we've been led to believe, it's also fair to observe that important video projects are already coming online. In the world's first deployment of a totally digital TV delivery system, Hughes Communications' DirecTv and Hubbard Broadcasting's United States Satellite Broadcasting (USSB) division have teamed with Thomson Consumer Electronics to deliver programs directly from a satellite to consumers via small 18-inch antennas. Scheduled to begin transmissions as this article goes to press, direct broadcast satellite service will realize several of the technical breakthroughs noted above:

- For the first time most American homes will have access to a true alternative to cable. Consumers who have been complaining about cable TV service will have a choice other than pulling the plug.

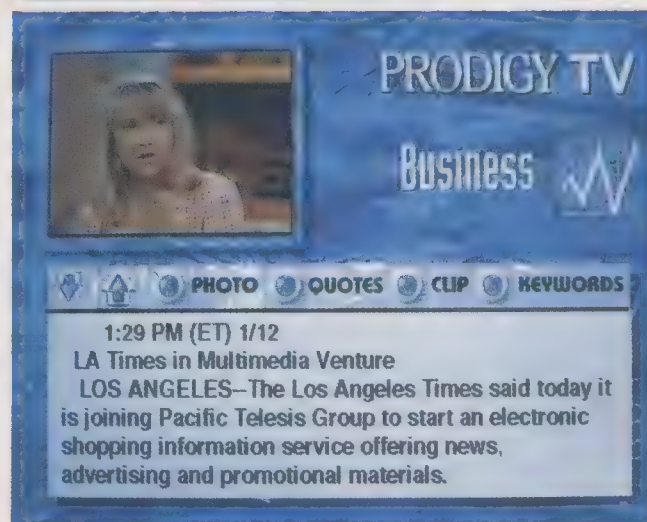
- For the first time videophiles will be able to bypass traditional NTSC transmissions and receive component pictures. Because DirecTv and USSB are digital systems, NTSC's analog imperfections are eliminated. To bypass NTSC, subscribers would simply use the S-video Y/C connection between the DirecTv satellite receiver and their TV sets.

- For the first time on any American TV system, all video channels will be delivered to the home with digital audio. Surround sound, transmitted digitally, will be dramatically enhanced.

- For the first time near video-on-demand will be offered to a mass audience. About 50 movie channels on DirecTv alone will insure that a viewer can always catch the beginning of a major film within 15 to 30 minutes of turning on the set.

- For the first time programs using a wide 16:9 aspect ratio will be available on a TV distribution system. DirecTv says it will broadcast any 16:9 programs provided by producers. Owners of 16:9 TV sets would, for the first time, have a source for high-quality widescreen films other than laserdiscs.

To receive these new services consumers must first purchase the Digital Satellite System receiver built and marketed by RCA. The basic model, priced at \$699, consists of an 18-inch receiving dish, a set-top receiver/decoder and a remote control. We'll have more to say about DSS as the national rollout, planned for October, nears. For now,



**Video Access:** Prototype interface for the Full Service Network (above) uses a small metaphor with each building offering access to related services; to the right, actress Teri Garr shares screen space with a newswire on Prodigy TV, a video-capable version of the online service being tested for delivery by cable.

suffice to say it's a milestone in advanced video communications.

And it's not alone. Primestar Partners offers a rental alternative to DSS. A Primestar distributor will come to your home and install a rental system capable of bringing in 77 channels. Primestar subscribers get a large lineup of traditional cable fare plus ten channels of pay-per-view movies and special events. Launched in 40 test markets in 1990, Primestar now serves about 70,000 homes. With its new \$250 million digital transmission system, also just getting underway, programs will be delivered with interference-free pictures and digital sound. The key difference between Primestar and DirecTv/USSB is that Primestar requires a significantly larger 39-inch diameter dish.

## AT WAR FOR YOUR WIRE

The picture for advanced video services over wire is far muddier. Cable

and telephone companies are fighting in the courts and in Congress for the right to enter each other's businesses. At the same time companies like Time Warner, Viacom, Bell Atlantic, TCI, US West and AT&T are beginning trials of varying complexity to perfect their systems and gauge consumer reaction to interactive TV and video services.

The most anticipated test is Time Warner's Full Service Network, which it's creating with Scientific Atlanta and Silicon Graphics, maker of the advanced TV-top boxes that will be used in the experiment. The network is intended as a comprehensive rehearsal for consumer acceptance of video-on-demand, home shopping and interactive games. The switching technology it plans to employ, known as asynchronous transfer mode, will permit phone calls, data, text and video to share the same wire.

That wire will extend to 4,000 homes (linked at an estimated cost of

\$7,000 each). However, Time Warner has had to postpone the launch until later this year because of the difficulty of creating the software that will run the system. Time Warner denies there are serious problems, but some industry watchers doubt so complex a system can be built as quickly or cost effectively as the company claims.

They have good reasons to be skeptical. In test after test, the number of homes actually wired for advanced video services falls far short of the number test sponsors initially announced. And not all tests are as advanced as they seem. In Cerritos, California, site of long-running experiments by GTE Corp., the movie-on-demand service was fulfilled by sneaker-clad workers who shuffled tapes from shelves to VCRs immediately after receiving viewer requests. (Nevertheless, GTE must have been encouraged by the results. The company, which delivers phone service in 33 states, recently said it will build a video network using fiber-optic and coaxial cable for 4 million homes during the coming decade. The new cabling would run alongside GTE's existing phone lines.)

"I don't think this information superhighway is going to happen so fast," said Frank J. Biondi Jr., president and CEO of Viacom. Biondi told entertainment and financial executives at a recent New York conference sponsored by Wertheim Schroder & Co. and *Variety* that it might take 10 years before even half of the country can receive enhanced video services. "It will probably take our children to realize it fully," Biondi added.

The near-term prospects for video-on-demand, often touted as a "killer" application on the info superhighway, is viewed with skepticism by computer ex-

perts as well. Ben Barnes, a senior IBM executive whose Power Parallel Systems division builds the huge computer servers that will store movies for video-on-demand, is dubious of many video-on-demand promises. "It's assumed the consumer will pay a premium for video-on-demand if he doesn't have to go out to the video store and if he can always get the movie he wants to see," says Barnes. "But estimates for that premium are marginal, anywhere from as little as a dollar to as high as five dollars."

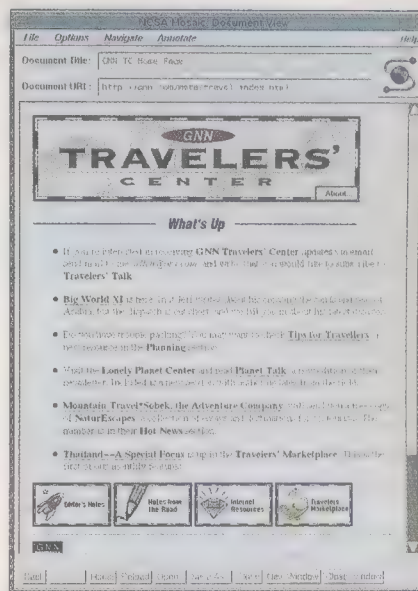
Barnes predicts video-on-demand will be available on about half the nation's cable networks in the next five years. He also believes it will coexist with other multimedia services that will generate the real revenue to support the emerging video infrastructure. Such applications, he said, will include home shopping and financial transactions, e-mail, digital libraries, virtual reality and interactive training.

It had better. True video-on-demand will require video servers, massive computers that can store and transmit large numbers of feature films, not guys in sneakers shuttling tapes back and forth. While the technology to do this is understood, servers could require about 80,000 gigabytes of disk space (equivalent to about 400,000 PCs) just to store the contents of a typical video rental outlet. Then the system will have to be able to send films to thousands of homes at the same time. This is uncharted territory: true video servers have yet to be built. Even when the technical kinks are worked out, it will be a long time before video servers can compete economically with the \$2 charge of an overnight movie rental.

Because of the expense of true video-on-demand, Barnes says it may have to be a loss leader, the kind of

service that earns less than it costs, but that draws people into more profitable services they might not otherwise use. Of course, if every video service is a loss leader, says Barnes, "you don't stay in business very long."

What about interactive movies and games? Strauss Zelnick, former president of Twentieth Century Fox and now



**Net Gain:** Internet travel service, running under Global Network Navigator by O'Reilly & Associates, uses video weather maps and may eventually become available via cable.

CEO of Crystal Dynamics, a high-end videogame producer, says the hurdles are primarily technical. "There's no shortage of capital willing to chase almost any hair-brained scheme as long as it's called interactive," says Zelnick. "But we are still not at the stage where we can film an actor, digitize the actor and create something that's better looking than anything created in a computer." Zelnick contends that even the best interactive games are "pretty primitive" and that the industry is still far from being able to re-master a motion picture into a CD-ROM environment.

## THE D.C. FACTOR

Another factor that could stall new video services is the increasingly shrill relationship between the federal government and the cable and telephone industries. For example, just in response to the FCC's latest round of cable regulations and rate cuts, cable companies announced major spending cuts on their part. TCI, which has committed \$11 billion to video-oriented networks over the next several years, is suspending \$500 million in planned capital investments, while Time Warner Cable, the country's

*continued on page 68*

## Fast Lanes And Slow Lanes

What's actually happening on the video superhighway? Here's a checklist to help you sort the progress from the promises. The first set of innovations are already appearing, the second set may not be realized for years.

### What's Real

- Digital component video transmissions.
- Digital sound delivery for TV programs.
- High-quality pictures using the wide 16:9 aspect ratio.
- The first new alternative to cable TV.
- Widening choice of movies at more frequent starting times.

### What's Not Yet Real

- True video-on-demand.
- Truly interactive video programs.
- Home-to-home interactive video communications.
- Sophisticated, low-cost desktop video production at home.

—FB

# AUTUMN INNOVATIONS

*What's the word on fall's new lines? Think bigger, thinner, flatter, smarter.*

"I could use a hand here," announced Claude Frank, Toshiba's video product marketing manager. Poised in a white lab coat, standing stage right behind a podium, Frank had just begun telling an assembly of audio/video dealers about the company's new VCRs. Suddenly, a large rubber arm sailed into view, and bounced before settling beside Frank's left foot.

novations. We traveled from Maui, where Panasonic held court, to Orlando, Florida, where Sharp Electronics set up shop, with layovers in Indiana, California, Arizona, New Jersey, New York and a couple other points in between.

This year's lines feature flurries of improvements, major and minor. TVs are getting a little bigger, a little thinner, a little flatter. Projection sets are growing still more sophisticated. Camcorders and VCRs are getting a little simpler. Last year's high-end features are trickling into less costly models. But prices, overall, are holding steady and, unless feared shortages of big-screen TV tubes come to pass, it will probably be a buyer's market out there. Here's what we saw among a baker's dozen of companies, and what you'll soon see:

## TOSHIBA

Setting up shop in Carlstadt, California at the La Costa Resort & Spa (where it's sponsoring a tennis tournament this month), Toshiba told nearly 200 dealers it's moving more aggressively into big screens. As proof, it introduced new flatter picture tubes, a deluxe TVCR, and projection sets with high-contrast screens and redesigned remotes.

Four new 32- and 35-inch sets will use the tube Toshiba calls FST Perfect. Toshiba has reworked the inner and the outer surfaces of its FST tube so they more closely conform to each other for less distortion and better de-

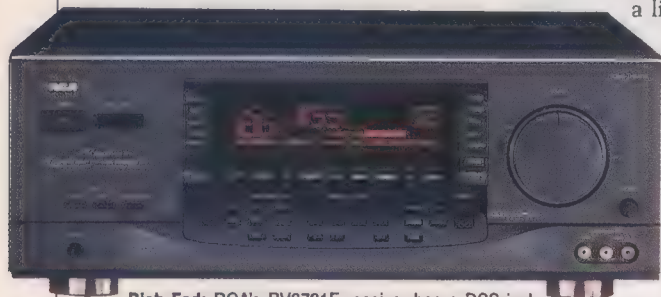


**Wide Debut:** Sharp's first widescreen TV, the 34-inch 34W1000, will be followed by a 30-inch set next January.

tail at the edges of the picture, plus a wider viewing angle. The electron guns will compensate for the flatter inner corners using a process Toshiba called "dynamic quadruple focus." TVs using it will be the 32-inch CX32D70 and CN32D90 sets, and the 35-inch CX35D70 and CN35D90 models at prices ranging from \$1,799 to \$2,599.

Toshiba's first TVCR, the industry's biggest, reflects the booming sales TVCRs are experiencing. The CV27D48 (\$999) is a 27-inch set with a four-head hi-fi VCR so well concealed the unit looks like a conventional TV. A comb filter, A/V inputs, MTS stereo sound, analog onscreen clocks, a full-

**Deluxe TVCR:** Toshiba's first TVCR, the CV27D48, is a 27-incher with a well-concealed four-head VCR.



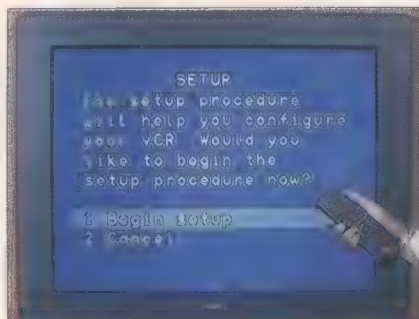
**Dish Fed:** RCA's RV3791F receiver has a DSS jack.

"Here's your hand, master," hissed Frank's hunchbacked assistant Igor, who was lurking in the shadows at the rear of the stage. "Would you like another one?" he muttered in a half-baked Transylvanian drawl.

The audience loved it, which was a good thing, since Toshiba was trying to inject a few laughs into the fact-saturated product demos it was giving its dealers that day. It's not easy keeping jaded store retailers entertained.

Each spring, major manufacturers preview their fall and winter products for top electronics buyers. This year saw more than the usual number of showings, so *Video Magazine* went on the road for an extended preview of Autumn's in-

*This story was written by Stan Pinkwas with contributions by Stewart Applegath, Jim Barry, Brent Butterworth and Kenneth Korman.*



One, Two, Three: RCA VCRs will be simpler to configure.

function remote, and onscreen prompts (like a "No Cassette" warning) round out the package.

Toshiba's eight projection sets, ranging from 48 to 56 inches, all have a high-contrast screen for richer colors and the company's slimmest cabinets: the 48-inchers are less than 20 inches deep. In VCRs, the company is introducing two new VHS decks, the M-660 and the M-650 with flying pre-amps on the head drums, and extending the V3 chassis it introduced at the start of the year to all six decks in its new series. The chassis increases reliability and reduces the number of parts needed.

One group of products you won't be seeing soon, if ever, is Toshiba's high-concept collection. Toshiba showed dealers an array of fascinating prototypes that included a TV with a built-in laserdisc or CD-ROM player (take your pick), a wireless 8mm VCR, a folding pocket-size LCD projector, a TV with a dockable VCR, a CCD color desktop camera for video e-mail, personal video assistants, a futuristic flexible LCD screen, and a TVCR with a built-in video camera. In fact, cigar-sized cameras, like the one David Letterman uses, were squeezed into almost any product, like a wireless cellular video-phone, that could accommodate one.

## RCA

The big news for Thomson Consumer Electronics this year is the receivers it's making for the Digital Satellite System, the small-dish, direct-broadcast operation to be launched this fall (when we'll have more to say about the project). However, the company also introduced a new line of RCA products, including slimmed-down TVs, a revamped series of VCRs, and camcorders

that emphasize ease of use with fewer, larger buttons.

RCA sells more color TVs than anyone else. But like some TV makers this year, it's putting a lot of effort into larger screen sizes, where higher profit margins reside.

That's why six of RCA's new TVs are projection sets, ranging in size from 46 to 60 inches, that are packaged in new slim cabinets with depths of 24-inches or less. Two projection models with deeper profiles—the 52-inch P52770EB (\$3,099) and the 46-inch P46770CK (\$2,799)—include underscreen storage compartments for home theater audio and video components.

RCA is fielding seven new VCRs



Time Machine: Sony's SLV-77HF VHS VCR automatically sets its clock by reading broadcast time settings.

and seven camcorders. All the VCRs use a new chassis that reduces the parts count by 30 percent. The VR721HF (\$749) includes an innovative digital jog/shuttle that eliminates the familiar dial in favor of menu-driven navigation buttons on a standard remote control. The camcorders include 8mm, VHS-C and full-size VHS models—RCA is now the only brand to cover all three formats—with at least one model in each format featuring a color viewfinder.

## PANASONIC AND TECHNICS

Celebrating 35 years of U.S. operations, Matsushita Consumer Electronics drew Panasonic and Technics dealers to Hawaii, where it displayed the first 35-inch direct-view TVs for Panasonic, improved color viewfinders and a pair of new high-end editing VCRs. Panasonic also introduced its first THX A/V receiver, for



Full Bodied: Hitachi VHS VM3700A with 24x digital zoom.

\$1,200. Technics announced a mini component system with the first Video CD player, also \$1,200, and said it will have more Video CD products in '95.

The 35-inch TV sets are the CT-35S31 (\$2,099) and the CT-35S21 (\$1,899). They include PanaBlack black-screen picture tubes, the company's Easicon Menu System, picture-in-picture, and artificial intelligence circuits that digitally control color and contrast levels. The Easicon system uses a set of graphic icons to access functions like PIP, closed captions and audio/video adjustments. Each function has a different icon and can be selected using the remote.

The improved viewfinders, with 180,000 pixels, deliver crisper images. They're turning up on two new compact Palmcorders, the PV-54 (\$1,699) and the \$1,400 PV-S64 (reviewed in July's "Videotests"), which also have digital image stabilization and full-size video heads. The new editing

Table Topper: Mitsubishi's TS-4553, a slim, 45-inch rear-projection TV, only weighs 110 pounds.





**Video Dashboard:** Sharp's high-concept dashboard shows how its LCD monitors could be used for navigation, system alerts and entertainment.

decks are the PV-4466 (\$649) and the S-VHS PV-S4480 (\$1,099). They include jog/shuttle dials on the front panels and the remotes, flying erase heads, and assemble editing for programming up to eight scenes. The S-VHS model also has a digital timebase corrector.

## SONY

Sony's new products are highlighted by the first VCRs to set their clocks automatically using broadcasts. PBS stations are transmitting time and date signals as part of the Extended Data Service on field 2 of the line reserved for closed captions in the vertical blanking interval of TV signals. Sony's SLV-770HF (\$599) and SLV-920HF (\$649) VHS VCRs, already on shelves, receive the signal and reset their clocks each time the deck is turned off.

Sony's TV line is broader than ever, with an expanded group of big screens and 15 direct-view models ranging from a 9-incher with a shelf bracket suitable for kitchens to a new top-of-the-line 32-inch XBR2 set for \$2,599. New features include a Program Palette on the Trinitron sets that uses preset picture adjustments for different types of programs, and a picture control called Lumi-sponder on V-series sets that automatically adjusts picture levels for room lighting conditions. Three new 46- and 53-inch rear-projection sets include a new Pro-Optic screen that combines a high-contrast layer with a transparent shield to protect the lenticular surface from such typical screen hazards as small, curious children.

## SHARP

While Sharp Electronics introduced

new models of its flagship LCD products, it also broadened its line of conventional TVs to include a 34-inch, 16:9 direct-view set, revamped its VHS VCRs and unveiled three new Slimcam VHS camcorders.

Sharp executives said they sold more than 130,000 ViewCams in the U.S. last year and expect to reach 200,000 this year thanks to a quartet of new models. Topping the line is the Hi8 VLH400U (\$2,199) that adds features like Instant Playback with slow motion, 8x power zoom, 16:9 compatibility, onscreen menus and backlight compensation. (See "Videotests" for a review.)

Sharp's 16:9 TV set, due out about now, includes six picture adjustment settings and is expected to sell for between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Sharp also said it will have a 30-inch 16:9 TV ready next January. The new 24-pound SharpVision XV-H35U LCD projector (\$4,695) incorporates a trio of three-inch LCD pan-

## INNOVATIONS

els for a total of 336,960 pixels, and more than 400 lines of resolution.

In VCRs, Sharp is now fully committed to center-drive models with a new tape transport, the Full Load Rapid Response System, that it says shortens the time the VCR takes to change functions. The VHS Slimcams include one 12x model that weighs a mere 3.3 pounds.

## HITACHI

In a year that seems to be about incremental changes, Hitachi unveiled some distinctive camcorders and TVs it feels will increase its visibility. Chief among them is a Hi8 camcorder, the *continued on page 72*



**Vroom Boxes:** Sony's KP-53BR25 TV includes a laminated contrast screen, while Technics SC-VC10 mini system has a Video CD player.



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# Charge of the

# LIGHTS BRIGADE

Video experts agree: The most important camcorder accessory is definitely an extra battery. Or a tripod. Or a wireless microphone. Or a color LCD monitor.

Obviously, there are several accessories any camcorder owner should consider buying. But most will only help you get a better picture. A video light, on the other hand, will let you get a picture when you otherwise couldn't.

Even when you're exploiting the low-light capability of today's camcorders, a light will help you get a vivid, colorful picture instead of a browned-out, noisy image. If you shoot indoors (or outdoors at night), you'll have a tough time getting good images from your camcorder without a video light.

But how much light do you need? Will an inexpensive 10-watt do, or do you need more power? And does it pay to buy the more expensive lights with extras like automatic light sensors? In this article, we'll examine the performance of a wide range of video lights, and point out advantages and disadvantages you probably didn't know existed.

Technical editor  
Lancelot Braithwaite

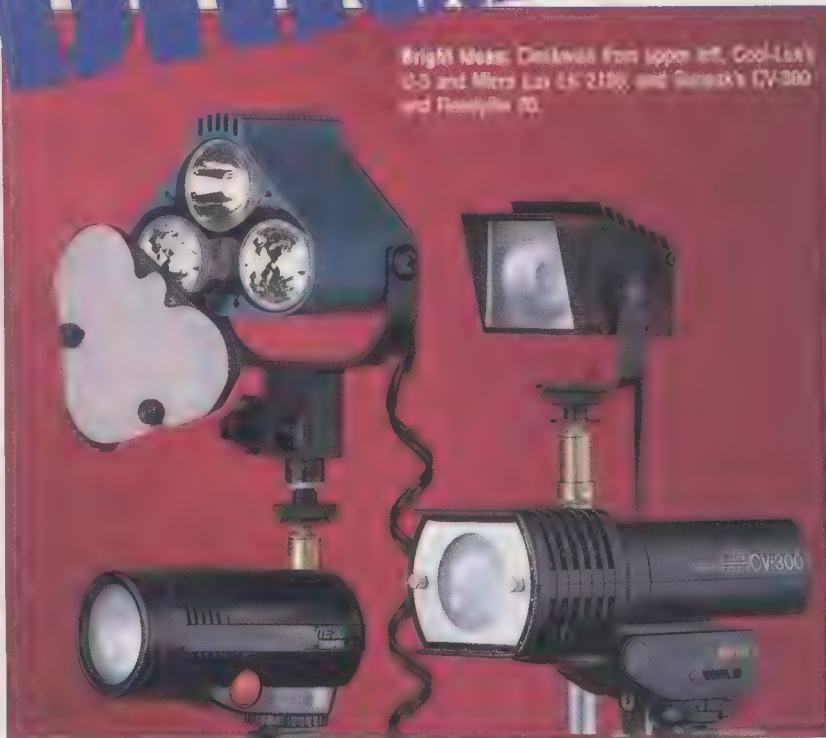
and I recently evaluated 11 video lights from four companies. We started by using each light in a real-world application: We illuminated two subjects in the dark at a distance of eight feet to get a rough idea of how each light would perform in a normal indoor shooting situation. All the lights were used at full power, with diffusers attached if they were included.

We then measured each light's output and coverage with a light meter at a distance of one meter. We considered a light's effective range of coverage to be the angle at which light output fell to half.

Finally, we conducted a run-down test with each light to check the battery life. You can get a rough idea of battery life in hours by dividing the light's power rating in watts by its operating voltage, then dividing the amp/hour rating of the battery by the result. (Batteries are usually rated in milli-amp/hours; to convert to amp/hours, just divide by 1,000.) But sometimes, the theoretical battery life doesn't quite correspond to actual performance.

The battery life ratings given below represent the approximate time it takes for the light to run down to half-power. You might get a minute or two of usable light beyond half-power,

Bright Mean: Clockwise from upper left, Cool-Lux's C-3 and Micro Lux LR-2100, and Sunpak's CV-300 and Flashyline 70.



*How 11 of video's brightest stars stack up against the light meter.*

but in most cases, the light will diminish rapidly once the battery has discharged this far. Keep in mind that our ratings are approximate. Given the unpredictability of the nickel-cadmium cells supplied with these lights, you could get two or three minutes more or less life, depending on how carefully you charge the battery.

If you fail to discharge the battery before you recharge it, the battery develops "memory," and it won't last as long on the next charge. You can also impair battery life by overcharging. That's easy to do with most of these lights, because all but one lack regulator chips inside the charger to cut off the power when the battery is charged. So even though operating a light might seem simple, don't toss away those instructions—follow the manufacturer's charging recommendations to the letter. Or if you can, use your camcorder battery charger, which probably has a regulator.

We tested five basic, no-frills lights, two with switchable power, two with sensors that automatically switch to a lower setting when possible, one that snaps onto the back of a camcorder, and one high-end model that holds three bulbs.

The lights came from Ambico, Cool-Lux, Sima and Sunpak. Six use readily available batteries that are interchangeable with those used on most Sony, Panasonic and JVC sub-compact camcorders. The Sunpak ReadyLite 20 and CZ-300, and the Ambico V-8810, use proprietary batteries, which you'll have to get from an authorized dealer or straight from the company. The Cool-Lux lights have car-lighter plugs, so you can use them with a variety of 12-volt battery packs. We used a \$90, 6.5-amp/hour "memory-free" battery with a belt strap.

We were surprised to find out that video lights are *not* a commodity item—they're very different, and using the wrong one can result in lousy video. While most have approximately the same color temperature (2,900 to 3,000 degrees Kelvin), they offer widely varying amounts of light, in widely varying

patterns. We'll describe each light below, grouped by manufacturer.

## AMBICO

- **V-8810** (10 watts, \$55). The lowest-powered light we tested, the V-8810 concentrates its beam to put out a respectable 172 lux. The beam is very tight, with horizontal and vertical coverage of 12 degrees. The light hit half-power after 18 minutes. Most camcorder enthusiasts will find they need more light—in our real-world test, the light fell off considerably at the edges of the subjects' faces.

- **V-0880** (20 watts, \$75). The V-0880 puts out an intense, 440-lux beam that did a fine job of lighting our two subjects. The beam is a bit broader

twin bulbs makes this light an attractive choice.

## COOL-LUX

- **Micro-Lux LK 2100** (35 watts, \$70 plus \$20 for power cord, bulbs and battery not included). With its rugged metal chassis, the Micro-Lux has a professional look and feel. Its very bright, 892-lux beam has a tight spread of 11 degrees horizontal, 10 degrees vertical—good for shooting one or two people, or subjects at a distance, but not so hot for covering large areas at close distance. It's intense enough to bother your subjects, so carry a diffuser. The beam has a square pattern, which is unusual, but we didn't find it troublesome.

With Cool-Lux's hefty belt-mount



and more usable than the V-8810's, at 17 degrees horizontal, 13 degrees vertical. The light doesn't last long, though: about 12 minutes to half-power.

- **V-0882** (10/20/30 watts, \$100). This light has one 10-watt and one 20-watt bulb, which can be used singly or in combination to get the light just right. With both bulbs on, it puts out a 170-lux beam. It achieved the broadest spread of any light in the test: 27 degrees horizontal, and vertical. The result is light that's reasonably bright, and very well spread—ideal for shooting groups of up to perhaps eight people. At 30 watts, the V-0882 lasted a respectable 21 minutes to half-power; it'll last longer at lower settings. The versatility afforded by the

battery, it took 145 minutes to drop to half-power. (You might even be able to get three hours of usable light from it.) At \$90 plus \$90 for the battery pack, it's expensive, but well worth it for the intense beam, long life and sturdy construction. Casual users won't want to haul around the heavy battery, but Cool-Lux also offers a smaller, 2.3-amp/hour battery for \$80.

- **U-3 Tri-Lite** (up to 105 watts, \$200 plus \$20 for power cord, battery and bulbs not included). With its three light sockets, the U-3 is the most expensive, versatile and powerful light we tested. You can use any combination of bulbs you want; we used two 35-watt floods and a 20-watt spot. (Bulbs cost \$14 to

# LIGHT BRIGADE



**Angle Advantage:** Lights with a tight angle of coverage, like Ambico's V-8810 (top), can safely illuminate only one or two subjects. Lights with broad coverage, like Sima's SL-9 (bottom), can cover much larger areas without producing a "hot spot" in the middle of the picture.

\$16 each.) All can be selected independently with separate switches on the back, and triggered together with a master switch. It has a tiny frame you can use to hold diffusers or gels—we used the diffuser all the time to keep it from blinding our subjects.

With the 20-watt spot, the angle of coverage is 14 degrees horizontal, and vertical, at 158 lux. Turning on one 35-watt flood boosts the brightness to 261 lux, and increases the spread to 18 degrees horizontal and vertical. With all three bulbs burning, the output is 336 lux, the horizontal spread is 19 degrees, the vertical is 20 degrees, and battery life is 31 minutes. (It would last hours with only one bulb going.)

The U-3 was overkill for the real-world shot—just one of its 35-watt bulbs provided plenty of light. To get a better idea of what the U-3 could do, I brought it along on a promotional video shoot—a party in a 50- by 50-foot room with

about 200 people. With the U-3 on a light stand (it's the only one of the lights that fits on one) and all the bulbs burning, I was able to light up a row of dancers from about 30 feet away. This light's expensive, but worth it.

## SIMA

● **SL-8** (30 watts, \$70). The SL-8 put out a very usable 246-lux beam with a broad spread of 15 degrees horizontal, 14 degrees vertical. For typical home video, this light strikes an almost ideal balance between intensity and angle of coverage. However, Sima's SL-9 offers two light settings, and costs only \$5 more. Battery life is a bit short at 15 minutes.

● **SL-9** (10/30 watts, \$75). The SL-9's dual power settings produce beams of 71.5 and 238 lux. The spread is 24 degrees horizontal, 21 degrees vertical at full power; it slightly differs at low power. Because the beam is oval-shaped, you might experience fall-off in the corners of the picture

at times. Battery life is only 15 minutes at full power, but about three times that at low power. Like the SL-8, it offers a good balance of characteristics for home video.

● **SL-6N** (15 watts, \$37). This unusual light fits between a battery and a camcorder, drawing power from the camcorder's battery. It works only with camcorders where the battery snaps onto the rear. Sima included a power meter on the side, a feature Lance loved. The SL-6N provided the least intensity of all the lights—only 87.2 lux—but a generous spread of 25 degrees horizontal, 24 degrees vertical.

The problem with this design is that it drastically cuts camcorder battery life: With a 2,400-milliamp/hour battery on a Panasonic PV-S62, it cut camcorder running time from tk minutes to tk minutes. But if you need an affordable light for occasional use in close-up shots, the SL-6N makes a lot of sense.

## SUNPAK

● **Readylite 20** (20 watts, \$80). The Readylite 20 is a nice, compact design with a tight, intense beam—our tests revealed an output of 502 lux with a spread of 13 degrees horizontal and vertical. The Readylite is great for one or two subjects, but don't try to shoot large groups with it. Also, its high brightness may bother your subjects—I've used a Readylite for a year, and I often find my-



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self using a sheet of tissue paper to diffuse it. Battery life is a shortish 14 minutes.

● CZ-200 (15 watts, \$140). The CZ-200 is the only light of the bunch with adjustable spread—it has a zoom lever on the side. At the spotlight setting, the spread was 10 degrees horizontal and vertical; at the flood setting, 18 degrees horizontal, 19 degrees vertical. We loved this feature—it lets you get perfect lighting easily, and avoid blinding your subjects.

The CZ-200 offers automatic light sensing—with the feature switched on, it lowers the power to the bulb when there's significant ambient light. Unfortunately, this lowers the color temperature to 2,590 degrees Kelvin and causes a buzzing sound that could leak into the camcorder's mic. In the spotlight setting, output is a bright 577 lux at full power, 150 lux at half power. At the flood setting, output is 224 lux at full power, 64 lux at half power.

Battery life is a healthy 28 minutes at full power, and that's with a small, 1,200-milliamp/hour battery. Snap on a 2,400-milliamp/hour battery, and you might get a solid hour of light. Despite the quirks of its light sensor, we really

liked this light because of its zoom feature and long life—we'd just leave it on full power all the time.

● CZ-300 (30 watts, \$200). This expensive light put out an awesome 1,430 lux at full power, 472 lux when the light sensor kicked in. Fortunately, it didn't buzz in low-power mode, and its color temperature only dropped to 2,700 degrees Kelvin. The beam is tight, at 13 degrees horizontal and vertical. The pattern is slightly oval, which caused no problems for us. The light comes with a removeable diffuser. Battery life was very good—25 minutes at full power.

For applications requiring lots of light over a small area, the CZ-300 is terrific. But it may be overkill for most home videos—the bright, tight light may bother your subjects. If Sunpak had included zoom in the CZ-300, too, it might be the perfect home video light. ■

## MULTIMEDIA

continued from page 55

video rather than compressed digital video. Image quality, in fact, is LaserActive's principle strength, at least as evidenced by the few Mega-LD titles sent

for review. Both *Triad Stone*, which features Japanese-style animation and Dolby Surround, and *Pyramid Patrol*, a space action/adventure with Roland Sound Space 3-D sound, looked and sounded great. However, with games priced at up to \$120 a pop, even dedicated gamers may hesitate to spend the money required to build up a library of titles.

Price, in fact, is LaserActive's most serious drawback. Even with the recent price cuts, the CLD-A100 player is \$755, the expansion module needed for games are priced at \$485 each and the karaoke pack costs \$350. Even the least expensive LaserActive configurations constitute a serious step-up in cost from any other system mentioned in this story.

## COMMODORE AMIGA CD32

Long a favorite of computer game players, the Commodore Amiga computer lends more than just its name to the Amiga CD32, which Commodore bills as the ultimate game machine. Essentially an Amiga computer with a CD-ROM drive, the CD32 is an impressive game console with one, perhaps fatal, flaw: At press time, parent company Commodore was in financial trouble and said it had begun liquidation.

That creates a tricky scenario for buyers. Since the company is selling off its assets, another company could pick up the system and either continue selling it under its present name or relaunch it under its own brand. And with Commodore on the rocks, retailers may begin discounting the system so they don't get stuck with inventory.

On the other hand, the system may go the way of its clunky predecessor, CDTV, which quickly disappeared from the market. Software support could also be a problem. While nearly 100 titles are available for the CD32 system, many are CDTV titles and Amiga ports, and few developers can be expected to devote resources to a system that could soon become history. All of which is too bad, because CD32 is an enjoyable system.

The Amiga CD32 uses Motorola's 32-bit 68EC020 microprocessor wedged to a double-speed CD-ROM drive. In addition, Commodore threw in its own Advanced Graphics Architecture (AGA) chipset, which allows the system to display 256,000 colors from a palette of 16.8 million colors.

Full-motion video is accomplished via an optional (\$249) MPEG module which will play Video CDs, Commodore's own software-compressed CDXL video and—as a result of an ability to locate buried Philips codes—CD-i Digital Videos as well. Like other multimedia systems, CD32 plays audio CDs and CD+Gs, including karaoke discs. ■

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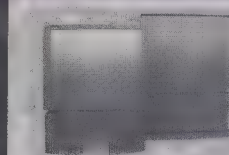
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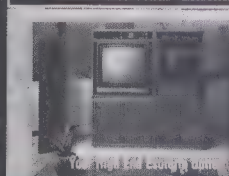
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# TAPES & DISCS

N E W R E L E A S E S



**Slouch Potatoes:** Twentysomethings Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke (center) cut some slack in *Reality Bites*.

## FEATURE FILMS

### *Reality Bites*

1993. Winona Ryder, Ethan Hawke, Ben Stiller; dir. Stiller. Surround, cc. (PG-13) 99 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

An old-fashioned romantic comedy in hip garb, *Reality Bites* surveys the so-called slacker generation, supposedly adrift without purpose, and decides they're not so different from the rest of us after all. Following four roommates—Lelaina (Winona Ryder), an aspiring documentary filmmaker; Troy (Ethan Hawke), a rock star wannabe; Vickie (Janeane Garofalo), a Gap manager worried about her AIDS test; and Sammy (Steve Zahn), who's struggling with his homosexuality—Helen Childress' breezy script finds that the search for love still inspires most everyday joys and sorrows. Alas, the prognosis is bleak for Troy and

Lelaina, whose relationship seems doomed after she's charmed by a glib TV executive (Ben Stiller, who also directs).

Fans of the wicked parodies perpetrated by Stiller (and the wonderfully sardonic Garofalo) on his underrated TV series may be surprised by the soft tone. Where pop-culture touchstones like the *Psychic Friends* Network, *Peter Frampton* and *Melrose Place* once inspired nasty zingers, here they're just an amusing backdrop for Lelaina's clumsy courtship rituals. Stiller's in a more humane groove these days, rendering the characters with genuine affection; even his own portrayal of a slick hustler suggests nothing worse than well-meaning cluelessness, instead of the crassness he once mocked. It's easier to take the high road, of course, when your crew includes the smoldering-yet-cool Hawke and the enchanting Ryder, whose effortless charisma recalls the great Hollywood legends. *Reality Bites* lacks bite, but its intelligence and warm heart shine brightly.

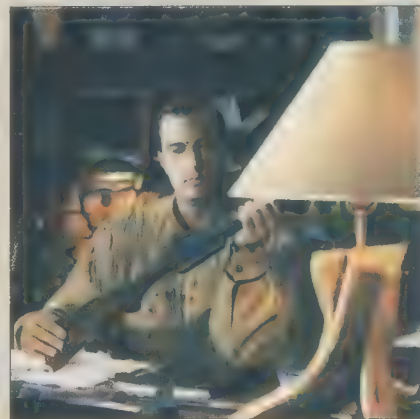
—Sol Louis Siegel

### *On Deadly Ground*

1993. Stephen Seagal, Michael Caine, Joan Chen; dir. Seagal. Surround, cc. (R) 102 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Warner.

Steven Seagal's directorial debut will go down in film history as one of the great so-bad-it's-good movies. Big Steve stars as an oil-fire specialist who turns against his former employers, a mega-corporation busily raping the Alaskan wilderness. Michael Caine (in a preposterous black dye job) plays the head of the evil bad guys—and in a movie like this, that's not a redundancy.

To be fair, the movie's problems probably aren't all Seagal's fault—it looks like it was re-edited prior to release. And his devotion to environmental problems is admirable. But his talents fall far short of his goals in a movie filled with plot glitches, *Friday* the 13th-type violence and ponderous dialog ("I didn't want to resort to violence," Seagal growls; "I didn't have any choice."). Add a subplot of Native American mysticism and you've got *Billy Jack Goes to Alaska*, though even BJ never got to blow up an entire oil rig. —M. Faust



**Man of Action:** Director/star Steven Seagal battles evil corporate polluters in *On Deadly Ground*.

# EDITOR'S CHOICE



kenneth korman

## The War Room

1993. George Stephanopoulos, James Carville; dir. D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. Surround. (PG) 96 min. priced for rental. Vidmark.

A beautiful moment punctuates the end of this documentary about Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign team. Waiting for the presidential election returns to come in, strategist James Carville indulges in some gallows humor by improvising a concession speech for a defeated Clinton to deliver. Then, as if he were Dan Rather or Peter Jennings, he segues into an evening-news story about Clinton's loss.

Carville is so good it's scary; tossing off this exquisitely crafted monolog comes as easily to him as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Twitchy and angular like a hungry jackrabbit, Carville in *The War Room* is a political animal whose instincts border on genius.

Footage of Carville at work is only one of the highlights of this Oscar-nominated cinema-verite film—a loosely-structured, non-narrated unguided tour. It also contains glimpses of the calculation behind every message sent out by the campaign—the 30 minutes of debate over the script of a 30-second TV commercial, for example, and the post-debate spin doctoring to color reporters' interpretations of what they've just witnessed. While the documentary doesn't really hit its stride until it focuses on the titular headquarters of Clinton's staff, it does include some choice absurdities from the campaign trail.

Unsolicited advice to James Carville: When you want to quit politics, get yourself an agent and lobby for your own TV show. If Tom Arnold can get a sitcom, you deserve one, too.

—George Mannes

## Shadowlands

1985. Joss Ackland, Claire Bloom; dir. Norman Stone. Mono. (NR) 92 min. \$19.95. Atlas.

## Shadowlands

1993. Anthony Hopkins, Debra Winger; dir. Richard Attenborough. Surround, cc. (PG) 131 min. priced for rental. HBO/Savoy.

Love stories about mature adults are so rare that *Shadowlands* can have a lasting impact even if imperfectly done. Both these versions of William Nicholson's play about the late-life romance



and marriage of C.S. Lewis—Oxford don, Christian lecturer, children's author and confirmed bachelor—to Joy Gresham, poet from Brooklyn, are flawed. They also have superb acting and the different takes on the material (though Nicholson wrote both screenplays) are interesting.

The 1985 BBC telefilm, recently reissued, relates the story to Lewis' Christianity and how it is tested by the very illness—Joy's cancer—that brings him to admit true love for the first time. Joss Ackland and Claire Bloom offer quietly compelling performances and the film is loaded with fine thumbnail characterizations that transcend the plodding direction and weak score.

Richard Attenborough's new theatrical version turns more on Lewis as a man and teacher who thinks he knows everything until Joy shows him otherwise. The film is done on a much larger scale, with incidents more underlined and line readings more emphatic, as if this was thought necessary for American audiences. But Attenborough also has Anthony Hopkins, whose Lewis eats up the screen without overwhelming it. Debra Winger is able to keep up with him, once you get used to her accent, and I wouldn't want to do without Joseph Mazzello as her son.

If you think I prefer the BBC version, you're right. And Attenborough's movie suffers badly in the pan-and-scan tape. The latter, however, may prove easier to find. In any event, one or both versions of this moving, marvelous story should definitely be seen.

—SLS

Johnny, the anti-hero of British director Mike Leigh's searing film *Naked* (New Line VHS for rental, Criterion laserdisc \$69.98), is not a nice man. As we meet him in the film's opening scene, he's turning a casual sexual encounter into something uniquely ugly and cruel. But it's not the last time we'll see *Naked* characters brandishing intimacy like a weapon. Warm relationships are as scarce as meaningful jobs in Leigh's nightmarish vision of '90s-style urban decay. *Naked* is not exactly traditional summer fare.

Johnny steals a car and leaves his native Manchester, where he was on the dole, for London, where he's functionally homeless. He stops at the apartment of an ex-girlfriend only long enough to disrupt her life and that of her roommate. What follows is a long night of wandering London's dark streets, a lost soul sideswiping other lost souls. As the alternately brutal and compassionate Johnny, actor David Thewliss earned every possible accolade last year except the Oscar, and his performance is truly unforgettable.

Because *Naked*'s squalor occurs mostly inside the heads of its characters, the film isn't nearly as graphic as another recent urban classic, the endlessly controversial *Bad Lieutenant*. But many will find it just as hard to take.

What struck me in a theatrical viewing as a broad and convincing portrait of post-Thatcher Britain now seems a little too harsh with the artificial close-ups and added intimacy of home video. (The Criterion disc, with the usual widescreen image, commentary from Thewliss and Leigh and other extras, will no doubt restore it to near-theatrical form.) But no matter how it's viewed, some see *Naked* as art of the highest order, while others are reminded of fingernails on a chalkboard. The only way to find out which camp you're in is to see this remarkable film for yourself.



Naked

## Searching for Bobby Fischer

1993. Joe Mantegna, Laurence Fishburne, Joan Allen, Max Pomeranc, Ben Kingsley; dir. Steven Zaillian. Stereo, cc. (PG) 110 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Paramount.

*Searching for Bobby Fischer* is a movie about playing chess. But not really. It actually takes on the widespread American notion of winning at any cost.

The story centers around Josh, a seven-year-old chess genius who finds it easy to win. The twist is that it is the adults in the story, not the boy, who must learn that winning isn't everything. Well-acted and beautifully photographed, *Bobby Fischer* is a bit too didactic for its own good, laying out its characters like points in an essay: the career-frustrated father who pushes Josh to win; the bitter coach who teaches the boy to hate his opponents, the better to beat them; the young competitor who cares for nothing but success at chess. Even the resolution is straight out of TV-movieland—clean, unambiguous and sentimentally satisfying.

Nonetheless, *Searching for Bobby Fischer* is an effective heart-warmer with a message, ably underlined by the sweet performance of Max Pomeranc as Josh: Games are just games, but character is forever. In an era of sequels, remakes,

recycled TV shows, and what seems like an endless stream of empty-headed films out of Hollywood, it's a relief to see someone trying to say something even remotely original.

—Tom Soter

## Heaven and Earth

1993. Hiep Thi Le, Tommy Lee Jones; wr./dir. Oliver Stone. Surround, cc. (R) 142 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$39.98. Warner.

Oliver Stone, the director of exciting, medium-budget movies like *Salvador* and the Oscar-winning *Platoon*, seems to have disappeared. Instead, we keep getting movies from someone named OLIVER STONE, whose potentially compelling subjects are usually overwhelmed by his frantic need to call attention to their (and his) importance, and by blatant overproduction. These tendencies have only gotten worse since Tom Cruise bailed him out in *Born on the Fourth of July*.

*Heaven and Earth* is about Le Ly Hayslip, a peasant woman abused by all sides in Vietnam's wars, who ended up a single mother and entrepreneur in California. With its very different takes on communism, Buddhism and Vietnamese life in general, this would have been great material for Stone. STONE, however, loads us up with Panavision scenery, heavy speeches and hysterical

melodrama. Hiep Thi Le isn't bad in the lead, merely buried by the visual and verbal histrionics. Only Tommy Lee Jones, as the tormented Marine who brings Le Ly to America, emerges unscathed.

Given his tendency for operatics, it's no surprise that STONE, and not Stone, is planning to shoot *Evita*. —SLS

## Philadelphia

1993. Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington; dir. Jonathan Demme. Surround, cc. (PG-13) 125 min. priced for rental. LD \$39.95. Columbia TriStar.

The most common criticism of *Philadelphia* is that it pulls its punches on the issues of AIDS and homosexuality. I don't buy it. Jonathan Demme's drama is direct, detailed and quietly passionate. It achieves its goals surpassingly well.

As you must know by now, Tom Hanks plays Andy Beckett, a hot-shot lawyer who sues his firm when they fire him after learning he has the disease. Joe Miller (Denzel Washington), a homophobic ambulance chaser, reluctantly takes his case simply because the antigay prejudice against Andy reminds him of the race bias against himself. What follows is essentially a debate on homophobia, played out in a city that is not only physical (and handsomely portrayed) but spiritual—a place where American values are subject to constant re-examination.

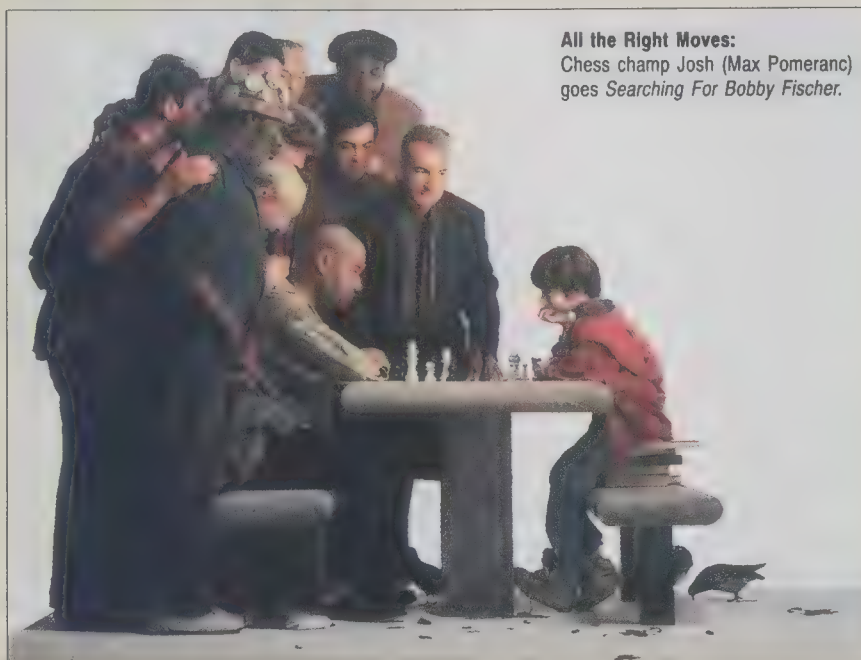
Demme's main cinematic weapon is the close-up, which he uses to impart all the love, rage and fear that the characters will not or cannot express in words. Having the faces to photograph helps. One can hardly begrudge Hanks his Oscar for his amazing wide-range performance. Washington is every bit as impressive, and Demme's usual large, eclectic supporting cast becomes a symphony of faces.

What *Philadelphia* finally says is that all people count; that when one suffers we all lose; and that what goes on behind closed doors is none of our business. You can't get much more emphatic than that. —SLS

## Household Saints

1993. Tracey Ullman, Lili Taylor; dir. Nancy Savoca. Surround. (R) 124 min. priced for rental. Columbia TriStar.

It's not surprising that American movies tend to avoid the touchy subject



**All the Right Moves:**  
Chess champ Josh (Max Pomeranc) goes *Searching For Bobby Fischer*.



**Household Saints**

of religion. But most Americans were raised with some sort of religious training, and even those who "grew out of it" often retain an emotional connection. That's the target audience for director Nancy Savoca's beautifully rendered *Household Saints*.

Set in New York City's Little Italy, *Household Saints* looks at three generations of women. At the center is Catherine (Tracey Ullman), a quiet young woman determined to make the best of an arranged marriage to the neighborhood butcher (Vincent D'Onofrio).

The toughest hurdle is having to live with her mother-in-law (Judith Malina), whose harsh, superstitious brand of old-world Catholicism reflects a life of poverty and struggle. Some of those traits skip a generation to Catherine's daughter (Lili Taylor). As a teenager, she decides to model herself after her namesake, St. Theresa, "the Little Flower" who found virtue in a life of self-denial and unexceptional labor.

Neither pro- nor anti-religion, *Household Saints* looks with compassion, humor and understanding at the role religion plays in people's lives. With an array of richly developed characters and a first-rate cast working at the top of its powers, this is one of the best American films of recent years.

—MF

## LASERDISCS

### *Fires of Kuwait*

1992. Nar. Rip Torn; dir. David Douglas. Surround, cc. (NR) 36 min. CAV 2 sides \$39.95. Lumivision.

This documentary was produced in IMAX, a specialized film format projected on vast movie screens as much as eight stories tall. In an IMAX promo that begins this disc, a man peers through a 3-by-5-inch hole in the bottom of a cardboard box and compares that to watching television. He pulls away the box, looks around freely, and calls that IMAX. "The psychological impact," he intones, "is obviously a million times stronger."

Well, that's great if you're in one of the many museums that house IMAX theaters. But it's not exactly what you want to hear after you've spent \$40 to watch this disc on your TV.

Anyway, *Fires of Kuwait*'s origin as a diversion for weary tourists is apparent in the finished product. This movie about extinguishing oil-well fires set by Iraqis during the recent Persian Gulf War is often visually arresting even on the small screen: The desolate sand, orange flames and blackened skies make the burning Kuwaiti oilfields look truly like hell on earth. The narration, though, coasts on that tiresome documentary cliché: the Number. "Ten thousand people...40 countries...27 teams...8 heavy equipment operators..." The pointless enumerations go on and on. And the script is as shallowly feel-good as one of those corporate-image ads that run on Sunday morning news shows. Sure, Saddam Hussein was an environmental Goofus for maliciously burning fossil fuels. But are we necessarily Galants because we wait until the fuel leaves the field before burning it ourselves?

—GM



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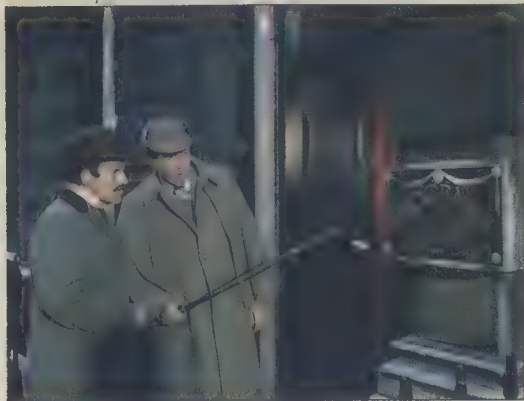
### ***The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes: Collector's Edition***

1970. Robert Stephens, Colin Blakley; dir. Billy Wilder. Digital mono, letterboxed. (PG-13) 125 min. plus supplement Side 3 CAV \$59.95. MGM/UA.

Sherlock Holmes is an unlikely subject for Billy Wilder, who made his reputation as the cynically witty director of comedies (*Some Like It Hot*), film noir (*Double Indemnity*) and drama (*The Lost Weekend*). But Holmes has always been a favorite of the director, and this movie, which many feared would be a satire of the great detective, is in fact an affectionate tribute. Holmes the man here becomes as important as Holmes the human reasoning machine.

The movie had a long genesis: After acquiring rights to the character, Wilder first attempted a Broadway musical, and then spent a decade working with various scenarists to cook up the script. It contains a series of four untold adventures that examined Holmes' relationships with his family, women, and Dr. Watson. It was shot as a multi-part epic, nearly four hours in completed form.

Unfortunately, studio concerns led to severe editing, and the final movie ran 125 minutes. This new laserdisc is an attempt to rectify that, presenting two of the missing sequences, albeit in frustratingly incomplete form (one has pic-



**Wilder's World:** *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes.*

ture—with subtitles from the script—but no audio, the other, audio but no picture) in a special supplement. There are also production stills, a complete version of an early draft of the screenplay, and an interview with the movie's editor. Miklos Rozsa's excellent score



**Perfectly Frank:** *House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula* star every monster on the Universal lot.

has also been isolated on one track.

Although the new footage doesn't change the film's tone much, it does deepen the characters, fleshing out nuances and adding some lovely comic touches (in one sequence, Watson uses Holmes' methods of deduction to great comic effect). What the new material doesn't explain, however, is the greatest mystery of all: why Hollywood would butcher such a wonderful movie. Even Holmes wouldn't find that elementary.

—TS

### ***House of Frankenstein/ House of Dracula***

1944/45. B&W. Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney Jr.; dir. Erle Kenton. Digital mono, cc. (NR) 71 min. (*Frankenstein*) and 67 min. (*Dracula*). Sides 2 and 4 CAV. MCA/Universal.

These two movies marked the end of the Universal Pictures horror cycle. Having succeeded with *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman*, the studio reasoned that reteaming the two monsters with Dracula, a mad scientist and a hunchback or two would work just as well.

And it did—in both of these films. The two pictures are great fun although, curiously, *House of Dracula*—which is padded with a lot of footage from earlier films—is the more interesting of the two.

*House of Frankenstein* is a fairly conventional horror-fest about a mad scientist (Boris Karloff) who manages to hook up with Dracula (John Carradine), the Wolfman (Lon Chaney Jr.) and the Frankenstein monster (Glenn Strange) after escaping from the asylum where he's been imprisoned. Nature runs its course and all are dispatched in episodic fashion. *House of Dracula* has a more interesting premise—Onslow Stevens plays a renowned doctor to whom Dracula and the Wolfman come in search of a cure for their conditions. Alas, the vampire can't resist his natural urges, and only the Wolfman finds a cure.

The characterizations are interesting, and the film makes excellent use of shadows, which is enhanced by a gorgeous transfer. The second side of each disc is in CAV, and contains stills as well as reissue trailers, and the annotation is excellent.

—Bruce Eder

## Ben-Hur 35th Anniversary Edition

1959. Charlton Heston, Stephen Boyd, Jack Hawkins; dir. William Wyler. Digital stereo, letterboxed. (NR) 217 min. plus 60 min. supplement. 8 sides CAV/1 side CLV. \$99.95. MGM/UA.

Biblical epics were big box office during the 1950s—one imagines it had something to do with the Cold War, and the notion of planetary death being only a touch of a button away. In any case, audiences felt no awkwardness in trying to get close to God by way of the big screen, flocking to epics like *The Robe* and *The Ten Commandments*. *Ben-Hur* was the biggest religious epic of them all, and MGM/UA has packaged this anniversary edition in the biggest boxed set to date for a picture of this vintage.

*Ben-Hur* would be easier to love if there weren't quite so much of it—217 minutes of Charlton Heston and Stephen Boyd scowling at each other is tough going, even amid Robert Surtees' gorgeous photography and Miklos Rozsa's loving, impassioned score. One must feel at least a flicker of resonance for the story's Christian message to get through it—fortunately for MGM tens of millions felt that way in 1959, and fortunately for MGM/UA, this disc is so handsome that it should do well among laser enthusiasts.

The movie itself looks virtually flawless in every frame, although the differences—if any—between this master and the one used for the previous letterboxed MGM/UA edition are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to justify the purchase of this box. But the supple-

mentary documentary is fun, fast, lively and informative. And the unmixed music on the analog tracks is much appreciated. The only drawback is the number of side breaks and disc changes required.

—BE

## Twin Peaks Volume 2

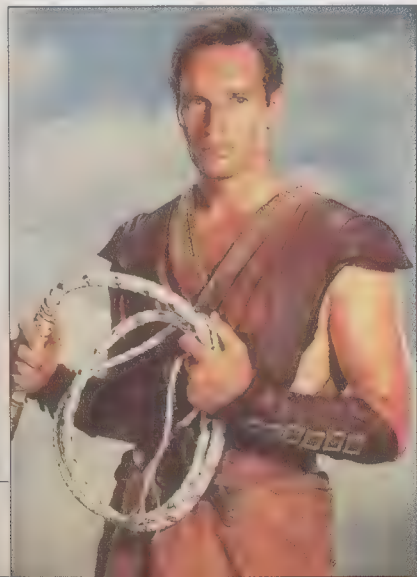
1990. Kyle MacLachlan, Michael Ontkean, Piper Laurie, Ray Wise, Sheryl Lee, Sherilyn Fenn; various dirs. Surround. (NR) 384 min. CLV 8 sides. \$124.99. Worldvision/Image.

It may take a vision of a giant—or the word of an uncommonly vigilant log—to convince you that the much-maligned second season of *Twin Peaks* really wasn't so disappointing.

Yes, there were too many characters (where was Groucho Renault?), just-plain-silly subplots (Nadine, the superhuman high-schooler) that lacked David Lynch's perverse touch, and enough confusion to justify the existence of "huh?" While these seven shows are only two episodes shy of the turning point—Leland's death, the end of the Laura Palmer saga—that marked *Peaks'* downward spiral, there's still much to love. Such as: Albert's continued acerbity; "the owls are not what they seem"; the echo-chamber antics of teen-angst trio Donna, James and Maddy; Audrey's Nancy Drew tendencies; new characters like "Plastic Bubble" horticulturist Harold Smith, designer men's wear maven "Dick" Tremayne and FBI honcho Gordon Cole; and, as always, Coop.

Should you still need convincing, check out the last episode's finale; it's brilliant on all fronts, a fascinating blend of unease and gut-wrenching horror. At the Roadhouse, the giant tells Cooper, "It is happening again." When the vision is over, the Great Northern's elderly room-service attendant shuffles over to the agent to say, "I'm so sorry"—an oddly touching moment. Meanwhile, at the Palmers', Bob claims another victim. It's mesmerizing.

Technically, this boxed set is well-done (minus one jarring outro to commercial before side 5's credits), with Lynch's attention to sound preserved—and it's packaged with a "no rubber band required" hinged cover. A final *Twin Peaks* laser boxed set is due to hit stores Aug. 17. —April P. Bernard



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## INTERACTIVE

**Jump: The David Bowie Interactive CD-ROM**

1994. Macintosh CD-ROM. \$44.95. Ion.

This is the perfect CD-ROM for the generation raised on MTV. It lets you "jump" into a virtual world patterned on David Bowie's "Jump They Say" single from his recent *Black Tie, White Noise* album, and become a hotshot video music director and/or sound engineer. Try it and you'll quickly get addicted, as this is the best example of the audio/video remix CD-ROM genre so far.

You can edit in real time as you watch five simultaneously running video tracks at the bottom of the screen, each culled from the original raw footage taped for the "Jump They Say" video. Just click on a sequence of screens to create your "mix." If you like it, save it. Thereafter, you can create and save hundreds of alternate mixes.

If audio is more your thing, head for the audio mixer and create a professional mixdown of the song. There are up to eight audio channels or tracks to mix and/or manipulate. Then, after a hard day at the editing suite, relax with an assortment of Bowie photographs and bio material, watch one of four full-length Bowie music videos—"Jump They Say," "Black Tie White Noise," "Miracle Goodnight," and "You've Been

Around"—or an interview in which Bowie discusses the creative process.

This CD-ROM has a few additional surprises as the user navigates Bowie's electronic office building. There's more going on than meets the eye. Watch out MTV if these music video CD-ROMs catch on.

—Jim McCullaugh

**Jurassic Park Interactive**

1994. 3DO CD. Approximately \$50. Universal Interactive Studios.

With all the hype surrounding the 3DO format and the promise of an interactive disc based on the highest grossing film of all time, it's hard not to be a little disappointed in *Jurassic Park Interactive*.

The game's intro is a gem, as the helicopter-approach-and-landing sequence from the movie is reproduced on limited-quality video, along with the stirring soundtrack. Also notable is the program's "narrator," which sets up the premise of the game and reminds you just how potent the audio aspect of multimedia can be. And young players may benefit from the disc's emphasis on time-management and puzzle-solving skills. But it soon evolves into an indistinct action/adventure arcade-style strategy game. You get the feeling you've experienced it somewhere else before.

The storyline is similar to that of the movie as visitors are stranded on the island and under attack by dinosaurs, and become victims of a corrupt computer



programmer. The player must try to get the guests to the heliport safely and put the park back "on line." This is one game, however, that might have humans, not dinosaurs, starving for more.

—JM

## KID VIDEO

**Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers**

1994. Green Ranger Mini-Series: *Green With Evil, Parts 1-5*. Mono. (NR) 25 min. each. \$12.95 each. Polygram.

This past Christmas, parents reportedly had fist fights in toy stores over the few available toys based on this kidvid phenomenon. Now the glut begins.

Actually, as flash fads go, the Rangers have a certain goofy charm. The show is a crazy quilt of battle scenes lifted from a Japanese sci-fi series, and domestic live-action comedy.

Our heroes are five photogenic teens with the acting talent of dryer lint. They defend their high school, hometown, the world, from an evil empress named Rita Repulsa and her cheesily-costumed henchmen. The Rangers repeatedly triumph thanks to martial arts skill and the odd ability to transform themselves into robot dinosaurs (don't ask). Plotlines are nonsensical, careening from cartoon slapstick to bloodless fighting, tagged with moral lessons that add a taste of social relevance (yeah, right).

This "mini-series" compiles five daily episodes into a particularly bloated tale. As Ross Perot would say, "Just do the math." Each tape includes barely 25 minutes of actual programming—in extended play mode, no less! That's over \$50 retail for 125 minutes on five separate tapes. Until Ralph Nader, and Captain Planet, punish these ecologically ignorant consumer bandits, program your VCR for the inevitable televised reruns. Just say no.

—Marianne Meyer



Cut to the Chase: David Bowie's new CD-ROM lets you re-edit his "Jump They Say" music video.

## MUSIC

### **U2: Zoo TV Live From Sydney**

1994. Bono, The Edge; dir. David Mallet. Stereo. (NR) 120 min. \$19.95. Polygram.

### **Madonna: The Girlie Show—Live Down Under**

1994. Dir. Mark "Aldo" Miceli. Stereo. (NR) 120 min. \$29.98. LD \$39.98. Warner Reprise.

Donald Trump, Elle McPherson. These are the people who get good seats at arena rock concerts. Meanwhile, you're scraping gum off your pants in Tier 97 and feeling like a fool because you thought the Pepsi sign blinking at stage-right was Mick Jagger. Face it, the best seat for a stadium show is in your living room. And with the release of *U2: Zoo TV Live From Sydney* and *Madonna: The Girlie Show—Live Down Under*, you can actually see two of last year's most extravagant offerings.

Though described as "high art meets high tech," the video record of U2's "Zoo TV" show often seems a meeting of "high tech meets high cameramen." While the band filters *Achtung Baby* and *Zooropa* material through a wall of interactive video, the direction jitters among sometimes awkward camera-angles. But the majority of *Zoo TV* takes advantage of the technology, culminating in a duet-by-satellite with Lou Reed on his "Satellite Of Love." For all its gimmickry, *U2: Zoo TV Live From Sydney* never obscures the pure excitement generated by the band.

*Madonna: The Girlie Show—Live Down Under* gets straight to the point as a topless woman in a G-string slides down a very long pole. But, no, that's not Madonna—Lady M's the one levitating through a hole in the stage brandishing a riding crop and crooning "Erotica." With each song transformed into a full-blown production number—"Like A Virgin" reinvented as a Dietrich ballad, "Holiday" transformed into a military march—*The Girlie Show* is a treat to behold. But most of the audience was so far away, Madonna must have seemed an amoeba on a bed of distant jello. Rest assured this video is a far superior alternative.

—JW



## CLASSICS

### **A Streetcar Named Desire: The Original Director's Version**

1951. B&W. Vivian Leigh, Marlon Brando, Kim Hunter; Karl Malden; dir. Elia Kazan. Mono. (PG) 125 min. \$39.99. Warner.

The hype is on with yet another director's cut, this time of Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The movie, which made the playwright's reputation when it opened in 1947, doesn't need such hype. (The new footage amounts to a piddling four minutes of steamy dialog, originally cut to satisfy someone's morality.) *Streetcar* remains a riveting, disturbing drama about loneliness, brutality and the nature of love.

The story, a four-character drama set during a sweltering New Orleans summer, hits all Williams' favorite themes (reality and illusion, fear and suffering, isolation and communication), and features the first of his many neurotic southern belles given to florid, theatrical speeches. Brit Vivian Leigh won her second Oscar as Blanche DuBois, the delicate, destructive and self-deluding interloper who has "always depended upon the kindness of strangers."

But the movie is gripping because of

Marlon Brando. As the brutal, brooding and searingly honest Stanley Kowalski, the man who rips apart Blanche's illusions, the actor became a star. It's easy to see why: The complex Kowalski is both savage and sympathetic, a virile wildman who bursts out of his sweaty T-shirts. In fact, as Brando alternates between fits of terrifying rage and childlike, inarticulate tenderness, it soon becomes clear that *Streetcar* may have gained a few minutes of new footage but hasn't lost its old punch. —Tom Soter

### **The Lion in Winter**

1968. Peter O'Toole, Katharine Hepburn, Anthony Hopkins, Timothy Dalton; dir. Anthony Harvey. Stereo, cc, letterboxed or pan-and-scan. (PG) 134 min. \$19.98. New Line.

*The Lion In Winter* was one of the jewels of the Avco/Embassy library, but unlike Mike Nichols' *The Graduate*, restoring *The Lion in Winter* to its proper luster was a long, frustrating process. But the work has paid off handsomely, bringing to life the most watchable, witty and worthwhile of the '60s historical epics.

Set in the twelfth century, *The Lion in Winter* tells of a Christmas gathering of the family of Henry II at which Henry (Peter O'Toole) squares off against his estranged queen, Eleanor (Katharine Hepburn), over which of their sons will succeed him to the throne—Richard (Anthony Hopkins) or John (Nigel Terry). The dialog is lusty, piercing, and venomous—a sort of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* played in medieval drag but with more charm. There's just enough period pageantry to keep the picture from being a bare-bones talk-fest, and the movie now has a compelling visual quality that was missing from earlier editions. The audio is also a triumph of restoration, with John Barry's stirring music leaping out explosively from the dialog.

At 134 minutes the film may seem long for audiences raised on the Errol Flynn version of the Richard/John battle (in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*). But director Anthony Harvey pulled it all together, including a half-dozen Oscar-caliber performances, most notably from Hopkins, whose Richard the Lionhearted is nearly as cruel and bloodthirsty as Hannibal Lector.

—BE

# DIRECTORY

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Blue Skies/Holiday Inn

1946/42. B&W/color. Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire; dir. Stuart Heisler (*Skies*), Mark Sandrich (*Inn*). Astaire/Crosby double feature with classic Irving Berlin songs like "Putting on the Ritz" and "White Christmas" and plots involving two friends competing for the same girl. Mono. (NR) 205 min. LD \$59.98. MCA/Universal.

### Computer Animation Festival Volume 2.0

1993. Twenty-two short films from envelope-pushing animators including videos by Peter Gabriel and Todd Rundgren. Stereo. (NR) 58 min. VHS \$19.98. LD \$29.98. Miramar/BMG.

### Fingers

1978. Harvey Keitel, Tisa Farrow, Jim Brown; dir. James Toback. Aspiring concert pianist gets involved with gangsters and reluctantly becomes their debt collector. Fascinating early work from Toback who went on to direct *The Big Bang* and to write *Bugsy*. Mono. (NR) 90 min. LD \$39.99. Turner.

### Francesco

1994. Mickey Rourke, Helena Bonham Carter; dir. Liliana Cavani. Rourke plays the Renaissance man who became Saint Francis of Assisi. Stereo. (PG-13) 119 min. VHS priced for rental. Hemdale.

### Germany in Autumn

1978. Collaborators: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Heinrich Boll, Volker Schlöndorff,



Shine on your  
Shoes and a Mel-  
ody in your Heart:  
Fred and Bing in  
*Blue Skies*

Edgar Reitz, Alexander Kluge, Alf Brustellin, Maximiliane Mainka, Katja Rupe, Hans Peter Closs, Bernhard Sinkel. Landmark collaboration among the leading writers and directors who formed the core of the New German Cinema, made in re-

sponse to the political terrorism of the time. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 124 min. VHS only, \$79.95. World Artists.

### I Know Where I'm Going

1945. B&W. Wendy Hiller, Roger Livesey, Pamela Brown, Nancy Price; dir. Michael Powell/ Emeric Pressburger. Headstrong young woman has her sensible plans of marriage to a rich lord postponed. Mono. (NR) 91 min. LD \$69.95. Criterion.

### Josepha

1982. Miou-Miou, Claude Brasseur, Bruno Cremer; dir. Christopher Frank. Two struggling actors try to extricate themselves from their marriage without causing one another pain. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 114 min. VHS only, \$59.95. Connoisseur.

### Leon the Pig Farmer

1992. Mark Frankel, Maryam D'Abo, Janet Suzman; dir. Vadim Jean/Gary Sinyor. Jewish test-tube baby Leon discovers his biological father is a Yorkshire pig farmer, accidentally cross-breeds a sheep, and creates what might be the first kosher pig. Stereo. (NR) 98 min. VHS only, \$89.98. Fox Lorber.

### Life Upside Down (La Vie à L'Envers)

1965. B&W. Charles Denner, Anna Gaylor; dir. Alain Jessua. A film positing the idea that total detachment from life is better than being a real estate developer. Best First Film at Venice. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 115 min. VHS only, \$79.95. Connoisseur.

continued on page 68

## Labels For Less

Vanessa  
Redgrave in  
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It's these hot, sweaty months that bring out men and women's strongest desires—much like those found in the films of Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan. In celebration of the video release of *A Streetcar Named Desire*—*The Original Director's Version* (\$39.99), MGM/UA has repriced a number of films to \$19.98, each directed by Kazan and/or based upon the work of Williams: *Visitors*, *The Last of the Mobile Hot-Shots*, *The Arrangement*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Fugitive Kind*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *Period of Adjustment*, *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *Baby Doll*, *East of Eden*, *A Face in the Crowd*, *The Sea of Grass* and *Splendor in the Grass*.

MCA/Universal is raising the temperature while lowering the price on *Isadora*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Dragon* and *CB4* to \$19.98; *The Hindenburg* and *The Border* come down to \$14.98.

Fox Lorber is also letting loose some hot foreign films at \$19.98 each: *In the Realm of Passion*, *In the Realm of the Senses*, *Red Kiss*, *Dona Flora and Her Two Husbands*, *Bye Bye Brazil*, *The Icicle Thief* and *36 Fillette*.

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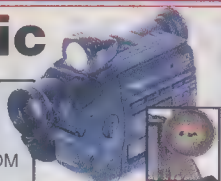
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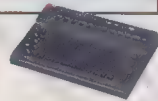
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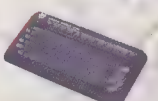
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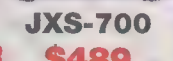
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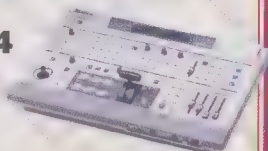
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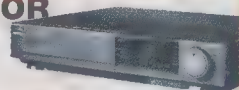
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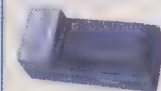


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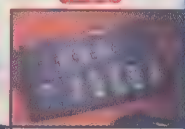


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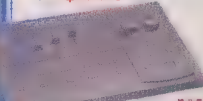
**PRO EDIT 5**

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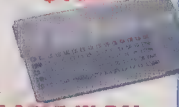
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**\$399**



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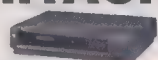
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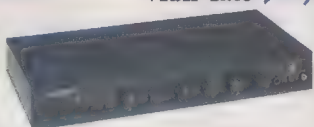


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V6350

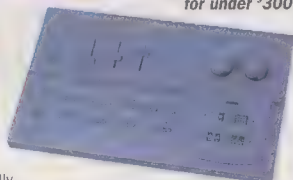
- 8 colors, 2 fonts, 4 sizes and 3 borders
- 10 pages of memory
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Automatic Control L Editor & Special Effects Generator for under \$300

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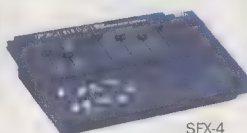
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**Full Color Electronic Titler w/ Special Title Effects**

Put your titles into motion & create unique Hollywood effects. Features deluxe full size keyboard, S-VHS & Hi8 compatibility, & 12 page memory. Letter choices include 8 colors, 4 sizes, outlining & boxing.

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SFX-4

**Special Effects Editor & Sound Mixer**

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- Over 100 wipe patterns
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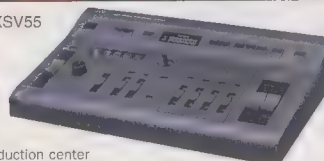
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JXSV55

**Ultimate S-VHS Production Center**

A complete home video production center that is compatible with all formats. The JXSV55 combines professional quality and several features into 1 easy to use unit.

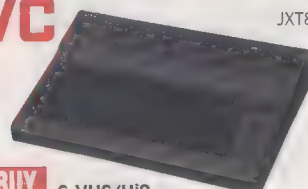
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backgrounds or combine wipe patterns for sixteen different effects including circle, curtain and letterbox. • Edit your video using fades and wipes as transitions between scenes! • 2A/V in & out plus a switchable monitor output. The JXSV55 is rated #1 by our techs!

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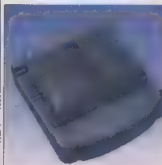
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U8000



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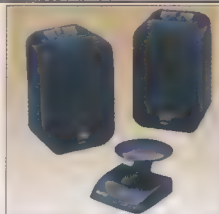
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SPM-10

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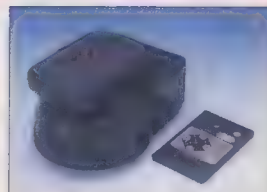
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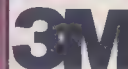
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# MX1

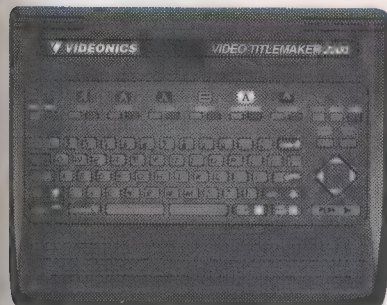
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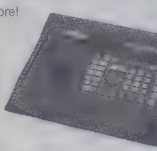
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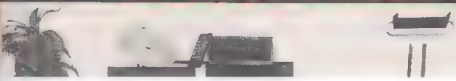
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HI 8MM PV-IQ604 COLOR VF  
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IE CODE PV-910 FULL SIZEVHS

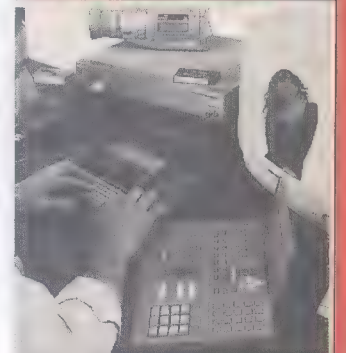


HI 8MM VME-39A COLOR VF  
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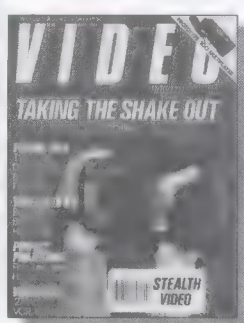
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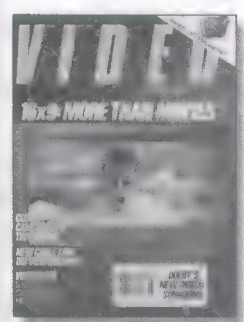
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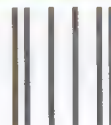
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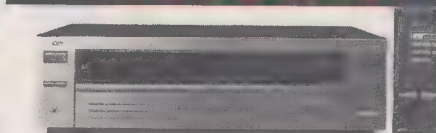
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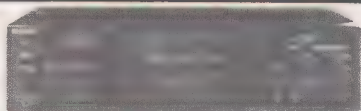
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continued from page 58

### A Man Escaped

1956. B&W. Francois Leterrier, Charles Le Clainche; dir. Robert Bresson. Surprisingly suspenseful Bresson in this story of a Resistance leader's escape from a Nazi prison. Won Best Director at Cannes. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 100 min. VHS only, \$69.95. New Yorker Video.

### Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit

1994. Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith, Kathy Najimy; dir. Bill Duke. Sister Whoopi takes on inner-city school-kids. Best-selling r&b soundtrack features Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye and The Sister Act Choir. Surround. (PG) 107 min. VHS priced for rental. LD \$39.99. Touchstone.

### Spider-Man & His Amazing Friends:

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1983. Nar. Stan Lee. Cyclops, Colossus, Spider-Man, Firestar, Iceman, Thunderbird, Storm, Nightcrawler, Sprite, Professor X; dir. Donald Jurwich. The masked mutants become prisoners of the Cyberiad. Historic episode with the original X-Men. Mono. (NR) 22 min. VHS only, \$14.99. Best.

### The Sun's Burial

1960. Kayoko Honoo, Junzaburo Ban, Jun Hamamura; dir. Nagisa Oshima. An anti-anti-hero depiction of the low-life that fill Osaka's biggest slum: Unromanticized pimps, prostitutes and teenage gang-members who battle to buy and sell the blood of the local workers. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 87 min. VHS only, \$79.95. New York.

### The Train

1964. B&W. Burt Lancaster, Paul Scofield, Jeanne Moreau; dir. John Frankenheimer. After German conquerors of Paris loot the Louvre and load up a train with all her treasures, Lancaster must decide if art is worth dying for. Mono. (NR) 133 min. LD letterboxed \$59.98. MGM/UA.

### Visitors From Space

1992. Dir. Juhan Af Grann. An investigation into the existence of UFOs. Awarded the 1993 UFO Film Festival's coveted Abductee-Contactee Prize for its work in the field of UFO-ology. Stereo. (NR) 57 min. VHS only, \$39.95. Films of the Nations.

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### England: Land of Splendor

1993. Various directors. Tour St. Paul's and Canterbury cathedrals, Brighton Pavillion, Cheddar Gorge, the Lake District, Hadrian's Wall, the Henley Regatta, Blenheim Palace—and that's just the first day. Stereo. (NR) 86 min. VHS only, \$29.95. International Video Network (800-767-4486).

### Look, Listen & Learn—

#### Spanish Club: ¡Los Animales!

1994. Dir. Robb Harriss. Trips to a farm and the zoo in volume 2 of the series (volume 1—¡Fiesta!) that helps kids aged 2-8 learn Spanish language and culture through folk songs, stories and excursions. Mono. (NR) 40 min. VHS only, \$19.95. Peapod Productions (800-998-8772).

## HYPE, HOPE

continued from page 39

second largest cable operator, is shrinking its capital cable expenditures by \$100 million this year and imposing a hiring freeze.

"The Full Service Network is a matter of time," said Gerald M. Levin, president and CEO of Time Warner. "But time, as Einstein pointed out, is relative, and at the moment the most relative component in scheduling this technology's arrival is our government's involvement." Levin continued: "A regulatory framework so involved, intricate and intrusive that it seems borrowed from the old Soviet Union is already discouraging private-sector investment, and significantly slowing interactive networks."

That's not how the FCC sees it. FCC Chairman Reed Hundt says the cable industry is getting what it deserves. "Congress finally decided that consumers believed they had no choice for video programming delivered to the home and that it was no longer acceptable to be told to take it or leave it," said Hundt. "Cable was regulated because consumers believed that was unfair and that unreasonable prices were being obtained."

Joining in the government bashing is the telephone industry. The regional phone companies want to be freed from regulation so they can use their networks to deliver multimedia programs and services to homes. Phone companies, like Bell Atlantic and Southwestern Bell, are already major players in the video superhighway. Phone companies have filed nearly two dozen proposals with the FCC to build broadband video networks around the country. These will allow, with the ease of a telephone, the inexpensive point-to-point transmission of personal video, audio, texts and photographs, making it possible for anyone to produce and distribute their own videos. Bell Atlantic, for example, plans to offer broadband services to a million households by early 1996 and to expand to all its key markets by 1998, according to CEO Ray Smith.

Not so fast, says the cable industry. Even while bickering with the government over its own rates and regulations, cable is aggressively pleading for government help in slowing down the telcos' march into video. In a spate of lawsuits throughout the country, cable interests are urging that the phone companies be prevented from building video networks until the FCC can impose new rules that will supposedly level the playing field.

Cable and phone companies both invoke the public interest, but most of the fighting is really about how to slice the huge new media pie among themselves and other corporate players, but too much feuding will impede the growth of services. So might demands by legitimate public interest groups to consider the need for equitable access to new services. Such voices have only begun to be heard, but the issues they raise concerning access and privacy have the potential to slow overly ambitious plans.

For example, consumer advocates want 20 percent of the info superhighway reserved as an "electronic commons" that can be used at little or no charge by any citizen. "Hundreds of channels will be barraging viewers with programming and advertising tailored to the most desirable demographic groups. High-speed printers will sit atop TV sets, continuously printing coupons and other sales pitches," says Jeffrey Chester, executive director for the Center for Media Education in Washington, D.C. "A vibrant telecommunications civic sector will be an essential counterbalance to the commercial forces which will dominate the information superhighway."

## ACCESS FOR ALL

Chester, whose efforts are backed by nearly 100 public interest organizations, insists that the concept of universal service, a fundamental element of telephone industry regulation, be applied to the information infrastructure. "Everybody has to have access to an instrument that provides some kind of interactive communication services in their home," he argues, explaining that the funds to realize universal access should come from the corporations that will enjoy enormous profits from the information revolution.

Few doubt the video technologies being promised will eventually arrive. But it's growing clearer the change will be generational, occurring over many years, no matter how dramatic individual projects may appear to be. "I don't think people who advocate a single solution understand how long it takes us humans to change our patterns of use," said Microsoft's Myhrvold. "Are you really going to have your teenagers tying up the TV to make phone calls, even on a video phone? Are you going to kneel in front of the TV doing taxes? There's a set of activities that's going to work around each of these devices."

Yet even from Myhrvold's point of view, much needs to be resolved. The magic of building the superhighway, he said, "is not what we expect of it but what we discover along the way." ■

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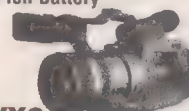


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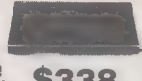


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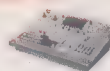


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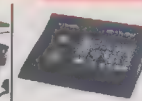
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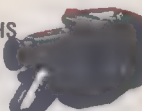
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# CAMCORNER

continued from page 18

ways (tracking). A set of dolly wheels under a tripod facilitates such motion in studios where the floor is smooth. Filmmakers almost always prefer to use a set of railroad-style tracks and a matching cart for smooth, controlled motion.

Practically all tripods use a series of telescoping tubes or leg extensions to vary the height. Many video tripods also have an elevator column to raise the camera a foot or more above the top of the point where the three legs meet. On cheap tripods, this tube tends to be the first part to get rickety. In general, avoid using the elevator column, and adjust height by extending the legs. Always extend the thicker segments first.

Basic physics tell us that the heavier a tripod is, the more stable it is. A four-pound camera atop a one-pound tripod is top-heavy. But on top of a 10-pound tripod, the center of gravity is much lower. Unfortunately, heavy tripods are no fun to lug around, which is a big reason why most casual videographers don't use them.

## TWO HEADS ARE BETTER

In my view, the best solution is to own two tripods—a heavy-duty, fluid-head model for serious projects, and a compact, lightweight, no-frills model for casual taping.

For serious work, consider Bogen's 3046 video tripod, equipped with the 3063 mini fluid head (the combination is sold as Bogen's 3140, for about \$325). A valuable accessory for this system is the bubble head level (Bogen 3115, about \$40), which helps ensure that the top and bottom of your frame are parallel to the horizon. All top-notch pro tripods have built-in bubble levels. Other heavy-duty models include the \$399 Bilora Pro930S, the \$575 Miller System 10A, and the pricey but top-notch \$1,000 Peter-Lisand Ultra-250.

For ultimate portability, Cullman's \$140 Magic One tripod folds to fit in a 15 by 5-1/2 by 1-1/2-inch case. It's reasonably sturdy, but the head is of the most basic design. Bilora's \$185 6144 tripod is a couple of notches larger (it collapses to 20 inches), but it has a good fluid head.

For the serious hobbyist who wants the fluidity of hand-held camcorder movements with the steadiness of pro cinematography, there's the \$500 Steadicam JR. It's a unique hand-held counter-weight mounting system that can help you create very smooth walking shots without a dolly or a track system.

If you're purchasing your first tripod, choose a model that will satisfy the ma-

jority of your needs. When your needs go beyond the basics, you can probably find a local media or public access center that rents heavy-duty tripods and other equipment (often including the Steadicam JR).

If you're setting up shop as a semi-pro or professional video producer, by all means splurge and get the best tripod you can possibly afford. Not only will it impress your clients, it will impress you by improving your camcorder movements. Another great thing about spending money on a good tripod is that, unlike fancy video equipment, it won't become obsolete in five years. I've had my two tripods for 10 years—I've even trekked one around the world in a backpack—and both still work like they're brand-new. ■

## TECH TIPS

### Cover story

I have a tip for those who record TV shows then erase the tape after they've watched them: keep track of each show on sticky notes stuck on the tape box instead of writing on the cassette itself. After watching the show, check it off. As a result, you only write on tapes that you want to keep permanently.

Teresa Avampato,  
Delray Beach, Florida

### See your PAL

To use a PAL tape on an NTSC VCR, select a VCR that has freeze frame and forward scan. Once in the freeze mode for about three seconds, you will get a rolling picture. Adjust the horizontal roll, then use frame advance or forward scan to view the tape.

George A. Washington,  
Cal City, California

### Close-up technique

A good way to transfer photographic images to video is to use an economical 4x close-up lens, the kind widely sold for still cameras. Set your camcorder lens, with the close-up ring on it, from eight to nine inches away from your photos and use the camcorder's focus ring or autofocus button to focus. Use the zoom lever to crop the photos. I find this technique easier than using the macro control and moving the photos in and out.

Abraham Sayson  
Richmond, British Columbia

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# INNOVATIONS

continued from page 42

VMH71A (\$1,899), designed to withstand water and punishment. It was quite an attention-getter. We came across it sitting half-submerged in an aquarium at the company's Manhattan line show. The camcorder, which we think of as a beachcam, can withstand being dunked in one foot of water for one minute.

The VMH71A includes a lithium-ion battery, a color viewfinder and electronic image stabilization. Hitachi added the latter two features to its \$999 VME58A, and the color viewfinder and flying-erase head to its VHS VM3700 (\$799).

Hitachi has expanded its direct-view TV line to 12 models. All the new sets include its Ultrablack technology. Ultra-vision, until now only available on Hitachi projection TVs, has been added to the 27-, 31- and 35-inch sets. The top-of-the-line 35-inch 35UX60B set (\$1,799) has been fitted with a favorite channel feature, which lets you customize a group of 16 channels for easier access. New projection sets include two 60-inch models (\$3,999 each) and a 50-inch model (\$2,999) with 1,000 lines of horizontal resolution.

Also new for this summer is a quartet of four-head VCRs led by the VT-F482 (\$449). Three of the decks have an illuminated remote with jog/shuttle control, and all have VCR Plus.

## JVC

JVC's big news is its remarkable new S-VHS-C GR-AX7 camcorder with a 570,000-pixel CCD and a cluster of other unique features (see "New Products," July), many of which have found their way into less costly VHS-C models. The best feature may be Auto Pause, which uses internal gyros to sense when the camcorder is pointing down, and stops the camcorder so you won't get long shots of your feet.

The GR-AX70 also offers a versatile programmed auto exposure system with unusual effects like monotone and fog filter. All JVC camcorders now feature random assemble editing (it's an option on the entry-level GR-AX30), which lets you use the camcorder's universal remote to control your VCR for automated editing.

The most noteworthy feature in JVC's new VCRs is Instant Review, which turns the deck on then automatically rewinds to the beginning of the last recorded program and starts playback. It's available on four VHS hi-fi

models: the HR-J610, the HR-VP612, the HR-VP618 and the HR-VP710. Also noteworthy: JVC's fielding no new S-VHS decks, although last year's HR-S4900 and HR-S6900 models will still be available.

JVC is moving into the high-end TV market with its new Premiere Series sets, which use black level expansion for purer blacks. Other interesting features include a 40-percent increase in picture-in-picture resolution, and a new remote with a four-way cursor that operates like a computer mouse. A help button on the remote accesses screens that explain the features and how to operate them.

## MITSUBISHI

Mitsubishi President Jack Osborne said his company is "coming back as an industry leader" and returning to a philosophy of limited distribution, which the company once embraced. Mitsubishi would like you to think of it as "the big screen company."

To this end, Mitsubishi introduced improvements for two of its singular products—table-top big-screen and 40-inch direct-view TVs. The innovative 45-inch Slim Line TS-4553 table-top projection set now has a companion 50-inch model, the TS-5053, with a suggested price of \$3,099. The 50-inch set weighs under 150 pounds and uses the same slim-cabinet design, shortened focal-length lens, shortened CRT and new electron gun as its smaller mate. The set's depth is only 24 inches.

Mitsubishi also cut the price for its 40-inch direct-view set, which debuted nearly two years ago for \$4,999. The new tag is \$3,499, which Mitsubishi executives said implies a street price under \$3,000. Also on hand was a second generation of flat direct-view sets: three 35-inch models and two 27-inches.

Mitsubishi introduced seven new VCRs, all center loading, including the HS-U770, a hi-fi S-VHS model with VCR Plus and cable box control.

## PHILIPS AND MAGNAVOX

Flashy new features are the name of the game at Philips and Magnavox, especially where TVs are concerned. For example, several Magnavox monitor/receivers, ranging from 25 to 32 inches, will have a feature called Remote Locator, which makes that lost remote control beep until you find it. More models, going down to 19 inches, will include Smart Sound, which automatically keeps the volume at a specified level, even during the loudest late-night used-car commercials.

Magnavox also introduced three 32-

inch sets, topped by the TP3290B (\$1,099), which has the above features plus Smart Windows for multiple picture-in-picture insets.

New projection sets include a pair of 53-inch models, Magnavox's FP5360 (\$2,899) and Philips' 53TP60 (\$2,999), both of which include dark acrylic contrast screens. Several of their new models are the first from any manufacturer to include inputs and outputs for a \$200 ghost cancellation box that will be introduced early next year.

Two new four-head TVCRs from Magnavox, the 19-inch CCS194 (\$549) and the 13-inch CCS144 (\$449), are the first to include VCR Plus. A total of nine VCRs will be introduced under the two brand names. Magnavox's top-of-the-line VR9362 (\$359) has a jog/shuttle dial, VCR Plus, front-panel A/V inputs and an automatic head cleaner.

This summer, the companies are fielding four new camcorders, two full-size VHS models and two in VHS-C. The top Magnavox compact is the CVS620 (\$899), which has a 12x zoom lens, a built-in video light, and an eight-function remote.

On the interactive side, Philips showed a small, top-loading CD-I player it plans to sell for \$299. A matching, scaled-down digital video cartridge will be sold separately. The player comes with a wired remote, and can accept a splitter that will let two play at the same time. Philips has high hopes this inexpensive player will help establish CD-I as a multimedia standard.

## SANYO AND FISHER

Sanyo and Fisher, which invited dealers out to California, are concentrating mostly on audio, but both companies had significant video introductions. Sanyo's big splash was a prototype of its 3DO player. The only difference between this and Panasonic's REAL 3DO player appears to be the styling—Sanyo uses wavy side panels for a more playful look. In fact a 3DO spokesman confirmed to us that Sanyo's player will have the same features and performance characteristics as the Panasonic player.

Fisher showed a prototype of a VCR that offers sound in fast search modes. The VCR lifts brief bits of audio off the tape and holds it in digital memory, so the sound comes across at normal pitch and speed, just severely edited. Look for an introduction late this year or early next.

Both Fisher and Sanyo are offering new TVs with the ultimate (for the moment) in automation. When you plug them in, they automatically power up, then scan for active channels and lock out inactive channels.

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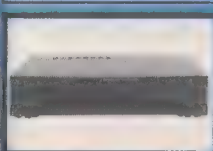
## 1-800-788-5555

2570 86<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
BROOKLYN NY 11214

STORE HOURS

MONDAY 10:00-6:00  
TUESDAY 10:00-6:00  
WEDNESDAY 10:00-6:00  
THURSDAY 10:00-6:00  
FRIDAY 10:00-6:00  
SATURDAY 10:00-6:00

**SATISFACTION GUARANTEED**  
within 14 Days



### Panasonic OMNIVISION VHS

NEW IQ-204	CALL
NEW IQ304 12X ZOOM	607
NEW IQ-404 COLOR	637
NEW IQ-504 COLOR LIGHT	CALL
NEW IQ 604 (COLOR)	CALL
PV-1Q503	637
NEW PV-54 COLOR VIEW	CALL
PV-64	CALL
PV-43 E.I.S.	677
PVS-372 SUPER	CALL
NEW PV-900	CALL
NEW PV-910	877.97
PV-760	997.97
PV-5770	697.00
PV-54380	697.00

VHS VCRS	
NEW PV-2401	167.97
NEW PV-4401	207.97
NEW PV-4411	CALL
NEW PV-4414	257.97
NEW PV-4451 Hi-Fi	CALL
NEW PV-4462 VCR & JOG	CALL



AG-455	1497.97
AG-W1	1649.97
AG-1970	1187.97
AG-3	2297.97
AG-195	997.97
AG-460	CALL
AG-5700	CALL
NEW AG-A570	CALL
AG-A96	CALL

MIXERS	
FEATURE DEAL OF THE MONTH	
WJ-MX35	1197.27
WJ-AVES	CALL
NEW WJAVE-7	CALL
WJ-MX50	PRICE

SPECIAL: DEALER PROGRAM 3 YEAR OR 5 YEAR- LOCAL SERVICE

**MULTI SYSTEM WORLDWIDE PAL/ SECAM...CALL**  
**TV'S COMBO/ VCR'S**

**Panasonic**  
**AIWA SONY**  
**HITACHI**  
**AKAI SHARP**  
**FUNAI SANYO**  
**TOSHIBA**

**CITIZEN**



### JVC

CAMCORDER

GR-SZ1	BEST PRICE
GR-AX25U	487.97
GR-AX35U	507.97
GR-AX55U	577.97
GR-AX75U D.I.S.	717.97
NEW GR-AX30	CALL
GR-AX37	CALL
NEW JVC PROFESSIONAL	
GY-X2-3CCDS-VHS	CALL
BR-S378U-S-VHS	CALL
SR-S360-S-VHS	CALL

ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION

VHS VCRS	
HR-S6900 SUPER	CALL
HR-S4900 SUPER	CALL
HR-S4700 SUPER	427.97
HR-VP700	357.97
NEW HR-VP612	CALL
HR-VP604	277.97
NEW HR-VP412	CALL
HR-J600	257.97
NEW HR-J410	CALL

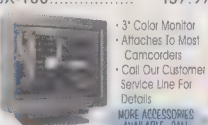


RECEIVERS	
NEW RX-315	CALL
NEW RX-515	207.00
NEW RX-715	277.00
NEW RX-815	349.00

CD PLAYERS	
NEW XL F211	167.97
XL-F106 BK	169
NEW XLM-415	107.97
XL-V161 TN	117.97
XL-261 TN	117.97
XL-Z1050 TN	437.97
NEW XLMC100	557.97
XMD-1	CALL

CASSETTE DECKS	
TD-W209 TN	117.97
TD-W309 TN	147.97
TD-W709 TN	217.97
TD-661 TN	CALL
TD-V1050 TN	367.97
TD-R441 TN	CALL

VIDEO EDITORS	
NEW JX-5700	CALL
JX-5300	197.97
MZ-707 MICROPHONE	127.97
JX-V55	347.97
JX-T88	197.97
JX-T66	137.97



**CITIZEN MONITORS**  
M-329 II... CALL AC ADAPTORS... CALL  
M-938... CALL TV TUNERS... CALL

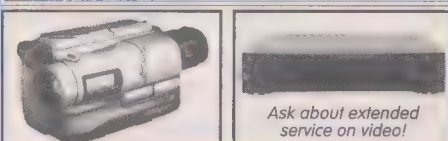
**We Also Carry...**

**BOSE**  
**FISHER**  
**Technics**  
**KEILWOOD**  
**NAD**  
**YAMAHA**  
**VIDEONICS**

## SONY

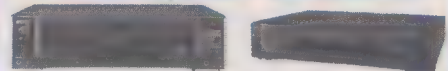
AUTHORIZED DEALERS

CAMCORDER • VHS VCRS • 8 MM VCRS • LASER DISCS  
• RECEIVERS • AND CASSETTE DECKS • BETA VCR'S



**WE CARRY...ewa®-marine:CALL!**  
**THE SPACESUIT FOR YOUR CAMERA**  
World's Highest Sold Underwater Camera Housing!

**CALL FOR LOW, LOW SONY SUMMER/FALL PRICES!!!**



NEW MDP-600 LASER DISC PLAYER	
• Auto Reverse	
• Speed Scan In Forward & Reverse	
• Digital Time Base Corrector For Crisp Pictures	
• Special Effects (11 Speeds)	
ALSO AVAILABLE	
NEW MDP-500, MDP-750, MDP-800...CALL!	
NEW SLV-920HF VHS Hi-Fi VCR	
• Dual Azimuth 4-Head Hi-Fi Stereo	
• VCR Plus & Makes Timer Prog. Easy	
• Dual Mode Shuttle	
• Built in Head Cleaner	
ALSO AVAILABLE	
NEW SLV-420, SLV-620, SLV-720 HF, SLV-770...CALL!	

### MINI COMPONENT SYSTEMS

SONY

• MHC-C50 5+1 CD CHANGER • DUAL CASSETTE PLAYER... CALL	
• MHC-C70 50 WATTS x 2... CALL	
• MHC-C90 100 WATTS x 2... CALL FOR LOWEST AUTHORIZED PRICE	

JVC	
NEW MX-C99	CALL
NEW MX-C77	FOR BEST PRICES
NEW MX-C55	CALL
NEW MX-C33	CALL
NEW MX-520	CALL

### AIWA Mini Max!...CALL

SONY AUDIO

• Stereo • Receivers • Compact Discs

### MITSUBISHI VCRS...CALL

HITACHI	
VCRS	
NEW VTM-282	CALL
NEW VTM-284	CALL
NEW VTM-382	CALL
VTM-372A	CALL
VTF-772	CALL
CAMCORDER	
VMS-8200A S-VHS	CALL
NEW VM-2700A VHS	CALL
VME-55A	CALL
VME-57A HI-8	CALL
VMI-38A 16X ZOOM	CALL
VMI-39A COLOR EIS	CALL

### GO VIDEO

3030... CALL  
NEW 3080X... CALL  
3070... PRICE  
NEW 8mm VHS... CALL

**ATTN: VIDEO MAKERS**  
**CHARGE/DISCHARGE RECONDITIONERS**  
SPM-1, SPM-3, SPM-4, SPM-7, SPM-10 PLUS... CALL FOR BEST PRICES!  
**SPECIAL EFFECTS DEPT. 7**  
SFX-5...CALL, SFX-4...177, EDIT-2X...119, EDIT-3...125, SCREENWRITER...105  
**AZDEN MICROPHONES**  
CAM-3...CALL, WMS-PRO...127, WMX-PRO...CALL, ECZ-990...CALL, WMR-2...CALL  
**VIDEO LENSES**  
CRYSTAL-QUARTZ OPTICS, TELEPHOTO-WIDE ANGLE...CALL  
**SUNPAK-BATTERIES NO MEM-VIDEO-LIGHTS- LIFETIME WARRANTY**  
**POWERMATE NO-MEM BATTERY & LENMAR NO MEM BATTERY**



### SHARP

SLIMCAM	547
VLL-390	537
NEW VLL-490	CALL
NEW VLL-64 (DUE JULY 94)	CALL
VLE-30 VIEWCAM	677.97
NEW VLE40	CALL
VL-HL100U VIEWCAM	1299.97

### RODA

AUTHORIZED DEALER

PRO 808	CC190
PRO809	CC603
PRO 830	CC 604
PRO 845	CC413
PRO 930	CC540
PRO 840	CC507



NEW VR 327	CALL
NEW VR 503	CALL
NEW VR 674HF	CALL
NEW VR 663HF	FREE
VR 667 HF	BEST PRICE
VR 720 SUPER HF	PRICE

### Canon

AUTHORIZED DEALER!

NEW L-2 (PRO)	CALL
NEW UCS5 EIS	CALL
NEW E700 EIS	689
AT DIGITAL	1027.97
NEW ES 1000	CALL
E-520	537.97

HIGH-POWER BATTERY PACKS

### Quasar

CAMCORDER/VCRS

**MINOLTA VIDEO**  
8mm VHS  
CALL FOR BEST PRICE!

**SERVICE PROGRAM:**  
**LOCAL 3 YEAR-5 YEAR**  
**ON PARTS & LABOR**

**Nikon**  
CAMCORDER  
AUTHORIZED DEALER

NEW VN 200 (TR30)	CALL
VN350 (TR82)	CALL
VN 550 (TR91)	CALL
VN 760 (TR700)	CALL

**NEW NIKON VIDEO FOR 1994!...CALL**  
**5 YEAR WARRANTY AVAILABLE**

**RICOH**  
CAMCORDER

VHS	12.99
8mm	29.99
HEAD CLEANERS	CALL



### PIONEER

The Art of Entertainment

NEW VSX D25	SPECIAL!
SX-201	PLEASE
SX-251R	CALL
SX-312R	FOR
VSX-402	OUR
VSX-452	BEST
NEW VSX-D453	PRICE
NEW VSX-D503	PLEASE
NEW VSX-D603	CALL
NEW VSX-703	FOR
NEW VSX-D903	BEST

**MONTHLY FEATURE:**  
**CLDA-100 LASER INTERACTIVE**  
**LASER ACTIVE HARDWARE... CALL**  
**LASERDISCS**  
NEW CLD-M303... CALL  
CLD-M403... CALL  
CLD-D503... FOR  
CLD-D703... BEST  
CLD-D702... PRICES!

**WE CARRY PIONEER MICROPHONES**

KARAOKE	
NEW CLD-V740	CALL
NEW CLD-V840	CALL
COMPACT DISC PLAYERS	
NEW PD-M423	CALL
NEW PD-M403	CALL
PD-M703	CALL
PD-802	CALL
PD-M603	CALL
PD-M902	CALL
PD-TM3	CALL

CASSETTE DECKS	
CT-W303R	BEST
CT-W403R	PRICE
CT-W503R	BEST
CT-W603R	PRICE
CT-W703R	BEST
CT-W802R	BEST
CT-WM62R	PRICES!

**NEW CAR STEREO DIVISION!**  
**CALL BEST PRICES!**

**OUR NEW LINE PIONEER ACCESSORIES**  
**AMPLIFIERS & TUNERS**  
**SPEAKERS AND AMPS**  
**GRAPHIC EQUALIZERS**

SP 7000	CALL
GR 777	CALL
GR 555	CALL
GR 470	CALL

**MONTHLY SPECIAL:**  
**T.V. TIME MANAGER**

The New T.V. Allowance...  
As Seen On: The Oprah Winfrey Show  
CBS This Morning - NBC Today - The ABC Home Show... Call For Details!

**CALL FOR DETAILS!**

**ASK ABOUT OUR EXCLUSIVE AUDIO SERVICE CONTRACT**

Circle 28 on Reader Service Card.

These are mail order prices only. In store prices may vary. If you are planning on coming to the store, please call in advance to reserve merchandise for pickup. We welcome all major credit cards with no surcharge. COD welcome, money order and certified checks. Allow 2-3 weeks for personal check clearance. Please call customer service for prior return authorization # before shipping. Shipping and handling is non refundable. All returns subject to restocking fee, and must be returned in original box, and in original mint condition, with unfiled warranty cards. No exceptions. Some items listed are Some items are imported & do not carry manufacturer's warranty. In some cases Coast To Coast provides its own warranty. USA manufacturer's warranty may be additional. Not responsible for typographical errors. Thank you for shopping with Coast to Coast, where service is the most.



# CAMCORDER HEADQUARTERS

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HOURS: MON., TUES. WED. 10AM-8PM/THURS. 10-9/FRI., SAT. & SUN. 10-7

877 POST ROAD EAST, WESTPORT, CT 06880



## SONY CAMCORDER RIOT!!!

**SONY** TR-700 HI-8MM 12X ZOOM

STABILIZER  
HI-FI STEREO  
2 LUX LOW LIGHT  
COLOR VIEWFINDER  
470,00 PIXELS

**Lowest Pricing!**



**SONY** TR-500 HI-8MM 10X ZOOM

STABILIZER  
HI-FI STEREO  
2 LUX LOW LIGHT  
COLOR VIEWFINDER  
DIGITAL ELS

**\$1038**

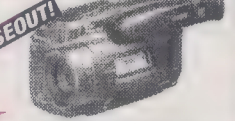


**SONY** TR-101 HI-8MM 10X ZOOM

2 LUX LOW LIGHT  
HI-FI STEREO  
STEADY SHOT  
REMOTE

**\$968**

**CLOSEOUT!**



**SONY** TR-91 8MM 10X ZOOM

1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
HI-FI STEREO  
IMAGE STABILIZER  
COLOR VIEWFINDER

**\$729**

**SPECIAL!**



**TR-65 8MM COLOR...\$679**

**SONY** TR-61 8MM 10X ZOOM

1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
HI-FI STEREO  
AE MODES  
WIDE ANGLE LENS

**\$529**

**TR-40 8MM...CALL NEW!**



Model	Features	Price
TR-700	12X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call
TR-500	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call
TR-101	10X Zoom, Steady Shot, Remote	Call
TR-91	10X Zoom, Image Stabilizer, Color Viewfinder	Call
TR-65	8mm Color, AE Modes	Call
TR-61	10X Zoom, Wide Angle Lens	Call
TR-40	8mm, New!	Call

## SONY VCR SALE

Model	Features	Price
VCR-1000	Hi-Fi Stereo, Auto Eject	Call
VCR-1000	Hi-Fi Stereo, Auto Eject	Call
VCR-1000	Hi-Fi Stereo, Auto Eject	Call
VCR-1000	Hi-Fi Stereo, Auto Eject	Call

**ICMA PRO 830 10X ZOOM**

AE PROGRAM  
1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
FLYING ERASE HEAD  
WIRELESS REMOTE

**CALL**



Model	Features	Price
PRO 830	10X Zoom, AE Program, Flying Erase Head	Call
PRO 830	10X Zoom, AE Program, Flying Erase Head	Call
PRO 830	10X Zoom, AE Program, Flying Erase Head	Call
PRO 830	10X Zoom, AE Program, Flying Erase Head	Call

## CANON VIDEO CAMERAS WITH CANON PERCISION

Canon 8mm Camcorders

Model	Features	Price
Hi-8	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call
Hi-8	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call
Hi-8	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call

Canon Hi-8 Camcorders

Model	Features	Price
Hi-8	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call
Hi-8	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call
Hi-8	10X Zoom, Stabilizer, Hi-Fi Stereo	Call

**RICOH** R16 8MM 10X1 ZOOM

1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
6 YEAR WARRANTY  
AE MODES  
WIDE ANGLE LENS

**CALL**

**AUTHORIZED DEALER**



**HITACHI** VM-E56A HI-FI STEREO

1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
3-WAY DIGITAL FADAR  
COLOR VIEWFINDER  
MULTI-FUNCTION REMOTE

**CALL**

**NEW**



Model	Features	Price
VM-E56A	Hi-Fi Stereo, 3-Way Digital Fadar	Call
VM-E56A	Hi-Fi Stereo, 3-Way Digital Fadar	Call
VM-E56A	Hi-Fi Stereo, 3-Way Digital Fadar	Call

**MINOLTA** MASTER 8-378

JITTER FREE  
IMAGE STABILIZER  
1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
WIRELESS REMOTE

**CALL**

**MINOLTA OPTICS**



Model	Features	Price
MASTER 8-378	Image Stabilizer, 1 Lux Low Light	Call
MASTER 8-378	Image Stabilizer, 1 Lux Low Light	Call
MASTER 8-378	Image Stabilizer, 1 Lux Low Light	Call

**SHARP** VLE-30U 8MM VIEWCAM

270 DEGREE ANGLE  
RECORDING  
ON SCREEN LCD MENU  
BUILT-IN SPEAKER

**\$659**

W/3" COLOR LCD SCREEN



Model	Features	Price
VLE-30U	270 Degree Angle Recording, On Screen LCD Menu	Call
VLE-30U	270 Degree Angle Recording, On Screen LCD Menu	Call
VLE-30U	270 Degree Angle Recording, On Screen LCD Menu	Call

**CITIZEN** M329 LCD PORTABLE VIDEO

COLOR MONITOR  
2.9" COLOR SCREEN  
INCLUDED AV CORDS  
& FOLDABLE HOOD

**\$129**

M329 MKII...CALL



**5 YEAR CAMCORDER WARRANTY...\$148**

**3 YEAR CAMCORDER WARRANTY...\$98**

WITH LOCAL SERVICE

**Panasonic** PV-43 20X1 DIGITAL ZOOM

VHS-C CAMCORDER  
ELS "STEADY SHOT"  
1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
HIGH SPEED SHUTTER

**\$678**



PV-53 20X1 DIGITAL ZOOM VHS-C

W/COLOR VIEWFINDER

PV-63 20X1 DIGITAL ZOOM VHS-C

W/COLOR VIEWFINDER

1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
12X ZOOM LENS  
WIRELESS REMOTE

**\$598**

**\$848**

**\$998**



**Panasonic** PV10504 12X ZOOM VHS-C

W/COLOR VIEWFINDER

1 LUX LOW LIGHT  
12X ZOOM LENS  
WIRELESS REMOTE

**\$748**



Model	Features	Price
PV-43	Digital Zoom, Steady Shot	Call
PV-53	Digital Zoom, Color Viewfinder	Call
PV-63	Digital Zoom, Color Viewfinder	Call
PV10504	12X Zoom, Color Viewfinder	Call

## INDUSTRIAL CORNER

PANASONIC AG-3 3 CCD, SVHS-C	\$2268
PANASONIC AG-450 10X1 ZOOM, HI-FI	\$1128
PANASONIC AG-455 12X1 ZOOM, HI-FI	\$1488
PANASONIC AG-460 2 CCD, 10X1 ZOOM	CALL
PANASONIC WJMX50	CALL
PANASONIC WJMX30	\$1928
PANASONIC WJ-AVE 5	\$1028
PANASONIC WJ-AVE-7	CALL
PANASONIC AG-1970	\$1198
PANASONIC AG-1740	CALL
PANASONIC AG-7700	CALL
PANASONIC AG-7450	CALL
PANASONIC AG-W1	\$1528

## HI-RES OPTIC CORNER

.42 WIDE ANGLE HI-RES LENS	\$118
.5 WIDE ANGLE HI-RES LENS	\$89
1.5 TELE HI-RES LENS	\$89
2.0 TELE HI-RES LENS	\$119
3.0 TELE HI-RES LENS	\$219
AF FILTER KIT	\$58
FLIP LENS 5 W/A 1.5 TELE	\$68



FULL LINE OF SLR CAMERAS & POINT AND SHOOT CAMERAS AT UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICES!!!

**WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF SLR CAMERAS**

**& POINT AND SHOOT CAMERAS AT UNBELIEVABLY LOW PRICES!!!**

"SHOPPING WITH US IS AS PLEASANT AS A WALK IN THE PARK"

# MARINE PARK

CAMERA & VIDEO INC.

TO ORDER TOLL FREE CALL!

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Closed Saturdays  
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Bklyn. N.Y. 11229



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FOR INQUIRIES ON PLACED ORDERS  
718-891-1844

LOCAL & OVERSEAS CALL  
718-891-1878



WE SHIP WORLDWIDE! OVERNIGHT SHIPPING AVAILABLE!

## SONY

Special Offer: To extend your warranty coverage to 5 years, add an additional \$199.00 to any listed camcorder price!

### CAMCORDERS

CCD-TR21	499.99	CCD-TR101	999.99
CCD-TR30	559.99	CCD-TR82	CALL
CCD-TR40	599.99	CCD-TR91	739.99
CCD-TR61	529.99	CCD-TR101	999.99
CCD-TR65	599.99	CCD-TR200	769.99
CCD-TR70	669.99	CCD-TR500	1079.99
		CCD-TR700	CALL
		CCD-VK3	2599.99
		CCD-FX420	499.99
		CCD-FX520	509.99
		CCD-FX620	599.99
		CCD-FX430	589.99
		CCD-FX530	669.99
		CCD-FX630	719.99
		CCD-SC5	589.99

## Panasonic

### PROFESSIONAL INDUSTRIAL LINE

VHS-C				
PV-43	679.99		AG-460	CALL
PV-53	849.99		AG-455	1419.99
PV-54	CALL		AG-195	879.99
PV-563	949.99		AG-186	699.99
PV-564	CALL		AG-3	2169.99
PV-IQ203	514.99			
PV-IQ303	519.99			
PV-IQ403	539.99			
PV-IQ503	629.99			
PV-IQ204	529.99			
PV-IQ304	579.99			
PV-IQ404	619.99			
PV-IQ504	679.99			
PV-IQ604	829.99			
FULL SIZE VHS				
PV-900	524.99			
PV-910	569.99			
PV-760	774.99			
PV-5770	944.99			
PV-362	599.99			
PV-372	799.99			

**JVC**

GR-A75U \$689.99

**JVC PROFESSIONAL**

SR-S360 Super VHS VCR.....799.99  
BR-S378U Super VHS VCR.....CALL

**SHARP**

**Canon**

VIDEO Reader Service Card

VIDEO Reader Service Card

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (with Area Code) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (with Area Code) \_\_\_\_\_

- What size is your primary viewing TV?  
20"-25" A ☐ 27"-25" B ☐ 25"-27" C ☐ 35"+ D ☐
- Approximately how many hours per day do you watch TV?  
0-2 E ☐ 3-5 F ☐ 6-10 G ☐
- How far in advance do you plan your TV viewing?  
1 hour H ☐ 1 day I ☐ 1 week J ☐ No Planning K ☐
- Do you tape "series" programming (i.e. soap operas, mini-series)?  
Yes L ☐ No M ☐
- Which sources do you use to plan TV viewing?  
Daily Newspaper N ☐ Cable Guide O ☐ Weekly Newspaper Insert P ☐  
TV Guide Q ☐ Other R ☐
- How many programs do you tape per week?  
1-5 S ☐ 5-7 T ☐ 7+ U ☐
- If programming your VCR was made easier would you record additional shows?  
Yes V ☐ No W ☐
- Are you currently a subscriber to VIDEO? Yes X ☐ No Y ☐

- What size is your primary viewing TV?  
20"-25" A ☐ 27"-25" B ☐ 25"-27" C ☐ 35"+ D ☐
- Approximately how many hours per day do you watch TV?  
0-2 E ☐ 3-5 F ☐ 6-10 G ☐
- How far in advance do you plan your TV viewing?  
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TV Guide Q ☐ Other R ☐
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1-5 S ☐ 5-7 T ☐ 7+ U ☐
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Yes V ☐ No W ☐
- Are you currently a subscriber to VIDEO? Yes X ☐ No Y ☐

Please circle product numbers to receive desired information

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165
166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
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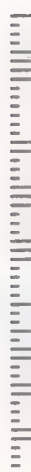
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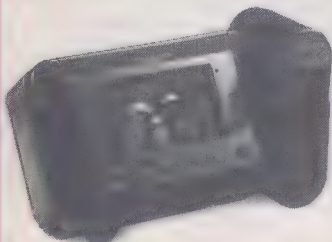
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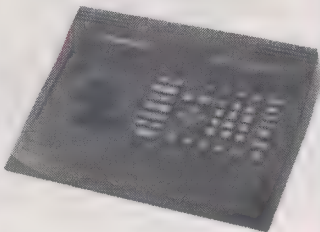
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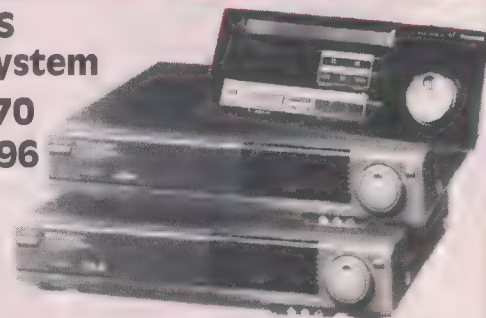
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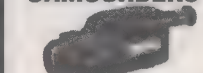
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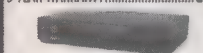
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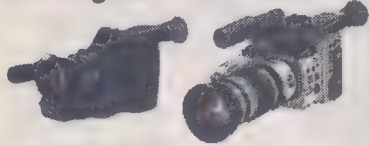
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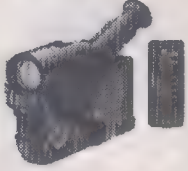


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## Panasonic



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- |           |            |      |
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- |          |                |      |
|----------|----------------|------|
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| VR-501   | 4 Head         | Call |
| VR-526A  | Built-in VCR+  | Call |
| VR-501HF | 4 Head Hi-Fi   | Call |
| VR-558HF | Front A/V      | Call |
| VR-662HF | 4 Head Hi-Fi   | Call |
| VR-664HF | Built-in VCR++ | Call |
| VR-667HF | Hi-Fi/VCR++    | Call |
| VR-720HF | S-VHS          | Call |
| VR-800HF | 8mm/VCR+       | Call |

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- VHS RECORDERS**
- |          |              |      |
|----------|--------------|------|
| VT-M171A | Quick Start  | Call |
| VT-M270A | 4 Head       | Call |
| VT-M272A | VCR+         | Call |
| VT-F370A | 4 Head Hi-Fi | Call |
| VT-F372A | 4 Head Hi-Fi | Call |
| VT-S772A | S-VHS/Head   | Call |

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- VHS CAMCORDERS**
- |        |                   |      |
|--------|-------------------|------|
| VM-750 | Hi-Fi/StableShot™ | Call |
| VM-340 | Color Viewfinder  | Call |
| VM-550 | StableShot™       | Call |

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- RECEIVERS**
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|-----------|------|
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| VSK-D25   | Call |
| VSK-D302S | Call |
| VSK-D702S | Call |
| VSK-502S  | Call |
| VSK-512S  | Call |
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| VSK-452   | Call |
| VSK-402   | Call |
| SX-312R   | Call |
| SX-251R   | Call |
| SX-201    | Call |

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|----------|------|
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| PD-TM2   | Call |
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| PD-M702  | Call |
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| PD-202   | Call |
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|----------|------|
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| PV-4401  | 4 Head            | Call |
| PV-4411  | VCR+              | Call |
| PV-4414  | VCR++             | Call |
| PV-4451  | 4 Head/Hi-Fi      | Call |
| PV-4461  | Hi-Fi/VCR+        | Call |
| PV-4462  | Hi-Fi/VCR++       | Call |
| PV-4464  | S-VHS             | Call |
| PV-4466  | Flying Erase Head | Call |
| PV-54400 | S-VHS/Hi-Fi       | Call |
| AG-1970  | Industrial        | Call |

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| XLMC100 | 100 Disc Changer | Call |

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| RX-905 VTN  | Call |
| RX-809 VTN  | Call |
| RX-709 VTN  | Call |

### CASSETTE DECKS

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|-------------|------|
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| TD-V661 TN  | Call |
| TD-R441 TN  | Call |
| TD-W709 TN  | Call |
| TD-W708 TN  | Call |
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- |             |      |
|-------------|------|
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| XL-2451 TN  | Call |
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| VL-L390U | Under 1 Lux | Call |
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|----------|--------------------|------|
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| VL-E30   | 3" Monitor Viewcam | Call |
| VL-E40   | 4" Monitor Viewcam | Call |
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|-----------------|----------|
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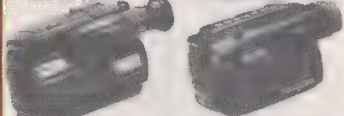


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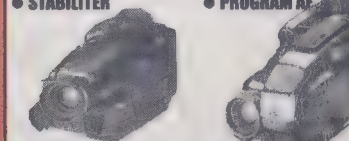
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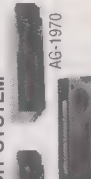
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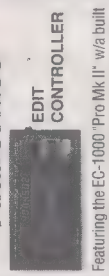
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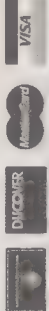
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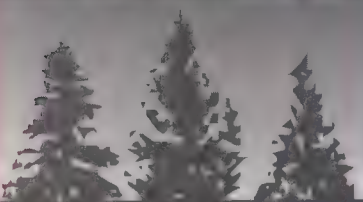


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To place an advertisement in VIDEO Magazine's Classifieds:

## REQUIREMENTS:

Payment must accompany advertisement. We accept checks, money orders and Mastercard/Visa. NOTE: ADVERTISERS USING A P.O. BOX NUMBER MUST INCLUDE PERMANENT STREET ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND CONTACT PERSON'S NAME FOR VIDEO MAGAZINE'S RECORDS. ADVERTISEMENTS RECEIVED WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

All advertisements are subject to Publisher's approval. VIDEO Magazine is not responsible for typographical errors. No "regular" advertisements will be allowed for the exchange, rental, trade, or sale of videotapes due to the potential problem of copyright infringement. No advertisement will be accepted which offer for sale products or services that have been illegal because they infringe on copyright protection or other forms of property ownership.

Advertisers must guarantee publisher that none of the materials and/or services sold through the advertisement violates any federal laws. Any violators will be barred from future advertising in the magazine.

## WORD ADVERTISEMENT:

Per Word: \$6.00 (15 word minimum)  
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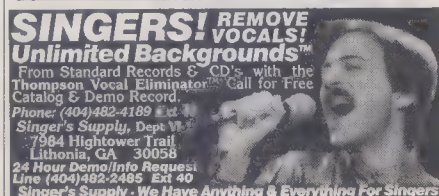


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ISSUE	RESERVE	MAT.
October 1994	8/4/94	8/11/94
November 1994	9/1/94	9/8/94
December 1994	9/29/94	10/6/94
January 1995	11/3/94	11/10/94



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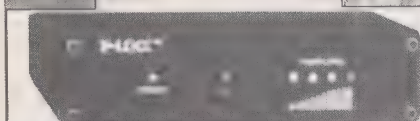
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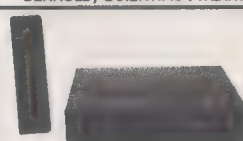
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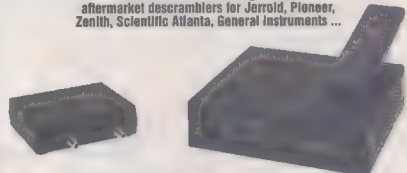
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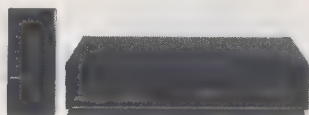
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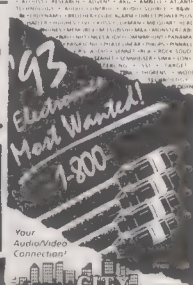
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## VIDEO CLASSIFIEDS

### ATTENTION

Effective with the July 1994 issue VIDEO Magazine will no longer carry ANY advertisements for adult materials in newsstand copies or copies mailed to our subscribers who have not specifically requested our sealed adult section. If you are a subscriber and wish to receive this section please write to: VIDEO Magazine, 460 West 34th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10001 and state: "I am over 21 years of age and I want to receive VIDEO Magazine's sealed adult section." You must sign your letter. You must also include either your subscriber label or exact match code and address from your label in your correspondence. Please allow 4-6 weeks to begin service.

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## An unexpected challenge for HDTV

Just when it looked like clear sailing for HDTV in the U. S., a challenge from some of Hollywood's leading cinematographers could derail the whole process. Through their organization, the American Society of Cinematographers, the filmmakers are questioning two key elements—the 16:9 aspect ratio and interlace scanning—being proposed by the HDTV Grand Alliance.

The Alliance is a consortium of seven companies developing and, soon, testing the HDTV transmission system being proposed to the Federal Communications Commission, which is expected to rule on the standard next year. ASC members have shot many of the top movies that have won Academy Awards. Its board of directors includes Vilmos Zsigmond, who shot *Deliverance* and *The Deer Hunter*, and Stanley Cortez, who's been shooting great movies since *The Magnificent Ambersons*.

Whether the scanning system should be interlaced or progressive has long been a subject of debate, but ASC criticism of the aspect ratio has come as a shock and a surprise since most observers believed the ratio had long been settled. The cinematographers want a wider 2:1 aspect ratio. They argue that the 16:9 aspect ratio (known as 1.78:1 in the film world) is a poor fit for most feature films.

HDTV would "from the beginning be crippled in its ability to properly display a large portion of the largest existing library of programming," said ASC vice president Steven Poster, whose credits include *Rocky V*. Not only would a 2:1 ratio cover all existing film formats, he argued, it is "a very comfortable format to compose in for original material."

The ASC acknowledges that a 2:1 ratio would slightly reduce resolution and modestly increase the weight, depth and price of HDTV receivers. But it contends that getting the aspect ratio right is more important. "The

shape of the canvas plays a huge role in creating the emotions that help tell stories through images," said Poster.

The ASC proposes that every film be mastered and distributed over advanced TV systems in its native aspect ratio. This might be 2.4:1, 2.2:1, 1.85:1, 1:66:1, 1.33:1 or 1.78:1 (the current 16:9 HDTV production standard). Coded digital instructions included with every film would describe the aspect ratio and specify the correct presentation, using letterboxing or blacked-out side panels, for automatic display on HDTV sets.

On the scanning issue, Poster said the current proposal to use interlace scanning for an interim period "amounts to bilking the public and there's the danger it might get stuck as the permanent standard." ASC president Victor Kemper, said that progressive scanning would give HDTV "the ability to display in whatever frame rate is appropriate to the material being displayed."

In fact, the Alliance is already committed initially to using progressive scanning in five of the six formats the proposed HDTV standard will cover. It supports rates of 60, 30 and 24 frames per second, yielding six possible scanning formats—all of which are progressive, except for the 60-frame, 1,080-line format.

If you are wondering why the cinematographers waited so long to make their case, the answer may be surprising.

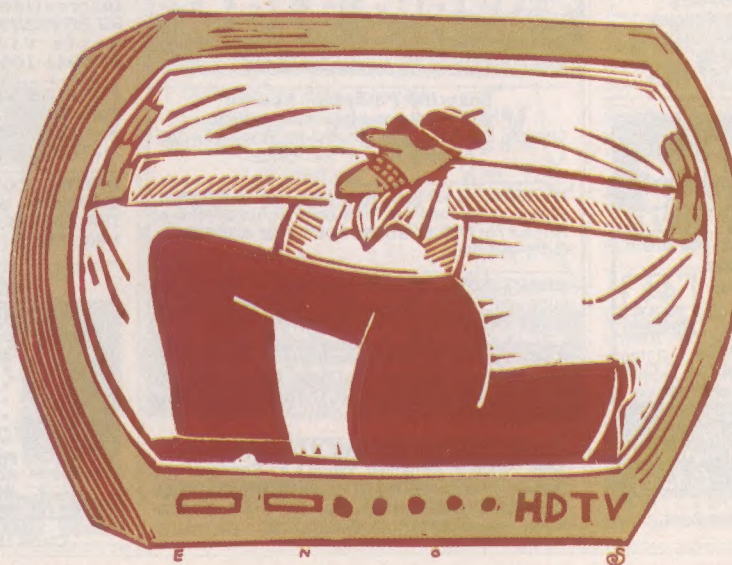
"Nobody ever asked us," said Poster. "The 16:9 ratio was conceived and sanctioned by the technical and manufacturing communities. We were told these were closed issues."

Reaction from HDTV supporters has been fast and furious. "The aspect ratio is the only thing I thought the whole world agreed on," said Joseph Donahue, spokesman for the Grand Alliance and senior vice president at Thomson Consumer Electronics. "It's been around for almost 10 years."

As to the ASC's contention it was not invited to participate in selecting the aspect ratio, Donahue said bluntly: "It's a lie." He said all meetings involving the standard were held in Los Angeles, and were attended by a wide range of motion picture personnel. "The FCC process is six and half years old," he said. "It's been very public. Everybody has been invited to participate. It was wide open. Every meeting."

Larry Thorpe, Sony's senior HDTV executive and a member of the group that selected 16:9, says the aspect ratio is friendly to all film formats and was the appropriate compromise for TV transmissions because it allows cinematographers to work in any aspect ratio they desire. Both Donahue and Thorpe said it would be too difficult and expensive to build progressively scanned consumer TV sets at this time.

Can the cinematographers change the proposed standard this late in the game? "The ship has sailed," insisted Thorpe. However, he acknowledged ASC opposition could cause a lot of "noise and pain." Donahue also doubts the filmmakers can force a change, but worries their opposition could disrupt the process. "Remember, there's not one track and one train. If they delay the process, if we blow it, we will sit here in 1998 and watch the Japanese do a spectacular job with their (own) digital HD system in Japan. And it will be 16:9."



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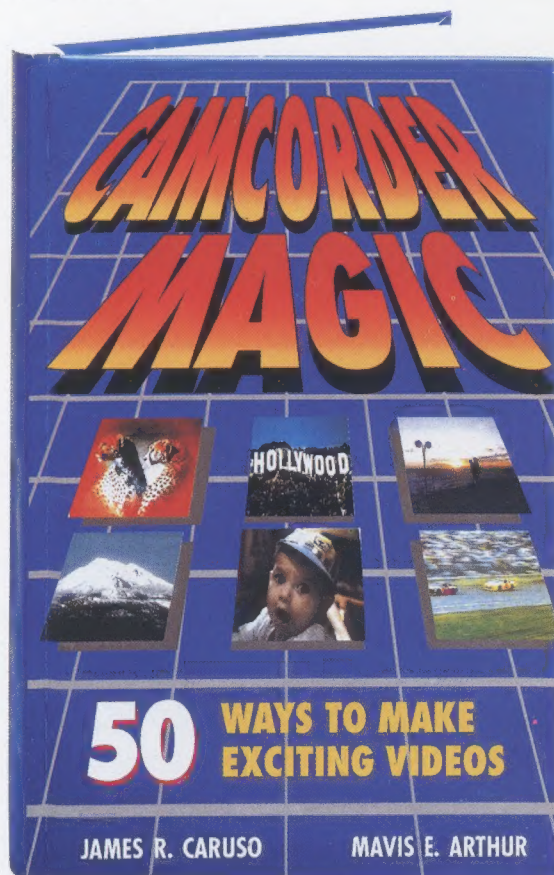
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